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AN
INTRODUCTION
TO
THE HISTORY
OF
GREAT BRITAIN
AND
IRELAND.

By JAMES MACPHERSON, Esq;

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INTRODUCTION



P R E F A C E.

INQUIRIES into antiquity are so little the taste of the present age, that a writer who employs his time in that way deceives himself if he expects to derive either much reputation or any advantage from his work. Prejudiced against the subject, we add contempt to its natural sterility, and seem to wish for no information from a province which we have been taught to assign to fiction and romance. Under these impressions the Author of the Introduction wrote. Without any of the ordinary incitements to literary labour, he was induced to proceed by the sole motive of private amusement.

Notwithstanding the small hopes he entertains of reconciling the public judgment to the

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the period which he has endeavoured to illustrate, he has taken some pains to present, in its most agreeable form, a subject not very capable of ornament. He has studied to be clear in disquisition, concise in observation, just in inference. An enemy to fiction himself, he imposes none upon the world. He advances nothing as fact without authorities; and his conjectures arise not so much from his own ingenuity, as from the proofs which the ancients have laid down before him.

The darkness, with which the prejudice and vanity of the Scots and Irish have covered their origin, has forced the Author to examine that point with a minuteness, which a dispute so unimportant seems not to deserve. But the disquisitions of many learned men had given a kind of consequence to the subject, when they rendered it perplexed and obscure. To extricate truth from the polemical rubbish of former antiquaries was a

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task of labour ; and the candid will forgive the length, on account of the propriety, of the disquisition, especially in a work which professedly treats of the antiquities of the British nations.

In that part of his work which relates to the dispute between the British and Irish Scots, the Author of the Introduction derives much of his information from the manuscript notes of the late very ingenious Dr. Macpherson, whose dissertations on the antiquities of the northern Britain are in the hands of the learned. In the other provinces of his subject, he has availed himself of the industry of some modern writers ; but he neither borrows their sentiments nor relies upon their judgment. He looks upon antiquity through the medium of the ancients, and thinks he sees it in its ge-

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nuine state. His work is formed on the general result of the information which the writers of Greece and Rome have transmitted from every quarter ; and if his system is not satisfactory, it, at least, is new.

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AN
INTRODUCTION
TO THE
HISTORY
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STATE AND REVOLUTIONS
OF
ANCIENT EUROPE.

Preliminary Reflections.

THE northern nations, whose character was in many respects singular, were remarkable for their aversion to the study of letters. Fierce and untractable by nature, and bred from their infancy to
B incursion

The northern nations
averse to
letters.

incurſion and depredation, they thought every purſuit not immediately ſubſervient to the profeſſion of arms mean and diſhonourable. They little conſidered that this prejudice was a fatal enemy to the fame which they fought after with ſo much eagerneſs in the field. In vain were exploits worthy of memory performed, when the only certain means of transmitting them to poſterity were diſcouraged and deſpiſed.

The middle
ages

In the cloud of ignorance which involved them at home they advanced into the provinces of the weſtern empire. Learning, which had long languiſhed among the Romans, expired with the power of that illuſtrious people; and Europe, in a great meaſure, returned to its original rudeneſs and barbarity. When the detached tribes who had ſubverted the government of the Romans formed themſelves into regular communities ſome knowledge of letters began to revive; but the Chriſtian clergy, following the policy of their predeceſſors the Druids, confined that knowledge to themſelves.

unfavour-
able to
hiſtory.

To record temporal events was not the firſt uſe made of letters by the religious of the middle ages. Miracles, viſions, and the lives of ſaints, were more important ſubjects, than the tranſactions of ſtates and kingdoms, in the eyes of a race of men whoſe influence depended
upon

upon keeping mankind in the shades of ignorance and superstition. We find, accordingly, that monks and hermits became illustrious in cells and in deserts, whilst the monarchs of Europe sat in obscurity upon their thrones.

The North, which, upon the decline of the Romans, had filled the provinces of the western empire with its colonies, sent abroad fresh armies of adventurers in the eighth and ninth ages. These, settling in some of the regions of the South, gave a new turn to the genius of the European nations. The feudal establishments, introduced, or at least, revived and confirmed by them, gave stability to government, and were highly favourable to a spirit of national dignity and independence. Lands and honours becoming hereditary, gave birth to a pride of family among the great barons; and they endeavoured to add lustre to the distinctions which they had acquired by tracing their ancestors through the same path of eminence to a remote antiquity. From individuals this genealogical enthusiasm spread to whole communities. Men possessed of the little literature of the times, and a talent for fable, either through ignorance or vanity, indulged the romantic passions of an ignorant race of men, by deducing the origin of their respective nations from very

The feudal establishments introduced historical inquiry.

distant æras. The antiquities of every country in Europe furnished an ample field of fiction; and it was impossible to form tales too extravagant or improbable for the credulity of the age. It is therefore no matter of wonder that we possess such a mass of legends for the ancient history of those nations, who, for many centuries, have made a figure in Europe.

The history of ancient Britain neglected.

The revival of critical learning has enabled foreigners to extricate, in a great measure, their antiquities from the fables of the middle ages: In Britain we content ourselves with looking back with contempt on the credulity of our ancestors. From a pride incident to polished times we are apt to think, and perhaps with some justice, that the transactions of the infancy of society are as unworthy of remembrance as they are imperfectly known. But this observation has been made, not more to depreciate our ancestors, than to cover a glaring defect in ourselves. The British nations, till of late years, were much more remarkable for the performance of great actions in the field, than for recording them with dignity and precision in the closet.

Design of the Author.

Men of abilities have removed this reproach from the nation. The latter periods of our history are reduced into form and precision; but the early part of our annals

annals still remains in the possession of fiction and romance. To dispel the shades which cover the antiquities of the British nations, to investigate their origin, to carry down some account of their character, manners, and government, into the times of records and domestic writers, is the design of this Introduction. The abilities of the Author are perhaps inadequate to so arduous an undertaking; but as he travels back into antiquity with some advantages which others have not possessed, he flatters himself that he shall be able to throw a new, if not a satisfactory light, on a subject hitherto little understood. Though, for want of sufficient guides, he should sometimes lose his way in a region of clouds and darkness, his hopes of the indulgence of the public are greater than his fears of their censure.

The Celtæ.

Two nations, the Celtæ and Sarmatæ, possessed Ancient Europe.

The Greeks threw the first feeble light on the Barbarians of the North and West: They rose distinctly to view in the progress of the Roman arms. Two nations, in a great variety of tribes, possessed the vast continent of Europe. The Celtæ extended themselves from the pillars of Hercules * to the banks of the Vistula † and Tanais ‡, from the Hellespont to the shores of the Baltic. The regions to the North-East of the Danube, from the Euxine Sea to the Frozen Ocean, were perambulated rather than inhabited by the European Sarmatæ. Between the Baltic and the extremities of the North lay the ancient Scandinavians, whose posterity, upon the decline of the Romans, carried into the South undoubted proofs of their Sarmatic extract.

The name of Celtæ

The Scythians of the western Europe were, for the first time, mentioned under the name of Celtæ, by Herodotus, in the eighty-seventh Olympiad. To investi-

* Celtæ occidua Europæ usque ad Gades incolunt. Strabo, lib. ii.

† Sarmatia, intus, quam ad mare latior, ab iis, quæ sequuntur, Vistulâ amne discreta. Pomp. Mela, lib. iii.

‡ Circa Tanaim Sarmatarum gentes degunt. Plin. lib. ii.

gate the origin of that appellation we must return into a period of remote antiquity. The Pelasgi of Peloponnesus and the Islands of the Archipelago were the first of the European Nomades who quitted the ambulatory life of their ancestors and applied themselves to the arts of civil life. Induced by the fine climate of Greece, they settled in fixed abodes; while yet their rude brethren to the North wandered after their cattle or game over the face of Europe. Improving their navigation by degrees, they sailed to the West, seized upon the nearest coast of Italy †, and moving into the heart of that country, met with the Umbri, and rose into a mixed nation under the name of Latins. Extending their navigation still further into the Mediterranean, the Phoceans made an establishment on the coast of Gaul; Massilia was founded by those adventurers about the forty-fifth Olympiad, when the elder Tarquin is said to have held the reins of government at Rome ‡.

The improvements introduced by the Phoceans had a great and sudden effect upon the manners of the Gauls. derives its origin from Gaël.

† Ἐπειτα Πελασγῶν τινες τῶν οἰκουντῶν ἐν τῇ καλουμένῃ Θετταλίᾳ, τῶν ἑαυτῶν ἀναγκασθέντες ἐκλιπεῖν σύνοικοι γέγονται τοῖς Ἀβorigῖσι. Dion. Halic. lib. i.

‡ Tempore Tarquinii regis ex Asia Phocensium juvenus in ultimas Galliae sinus profectus, Massiliam condidit. Justin, lib. xliii.

Agriculture,

Agriculture, before imperfectly understood, was prosecuted with vigour and success §. The means of subsistence being augmented, population increased of course; migrating expeditions were formed to ease the country of its number of inhabitants, and the regions of Europe being traversed rather than peopled by the Nomades, received successive swarms of Galic emigrants. Spain ||, Italy *, Germany between the Rhine and the Baltic †, and the British Isles** were filled with colonies from Gaul,

§ Ab his Galli usum vitæ cultioris et agrorum cultus didicerunt. Justin. lib. xliii.

|| Galli occidua Europæ usque ad Gades incolunt. Strabo, lib. ii.

* De transitu in Italiam Gallorum hæc accepimus. Prisco Tarquinio Romæ regnante, Gallia adeo frugum hominumque fertilis fuit, ut abundans multitudo vix regi videretur posse. Ambigatus, magno natu ipse jam, exonerare prægravante turba regnum cupiens Bellovesum ac Sigovesum, sororis filios impigros juvenes missurum se esse in quas dii dedissent auguriis sedes ostendit. Belloveso in Italiam viam dii dederunt. Livius, lib. v.—*Ἀλκιμωτάτοι μὲν τῶν Γαλατῶν οἱ καλοῦμενοι Λυσίτανοι.* Diod. Sic. lib. v.

† Ac fuit antea tempus cum, Galli propter hominum multitudinem agrique inopiam, trans Rhenum colonias mitterent. Cæsar, lib. vi.

Validiores olim Gallorum res fuisse summus auctorum Divus Julius tradit eoque credibile est Gallos in Germanium transgressos. Tacit. Germ. xxviii.

** In universum tamen æstimanti Gallos vicinum solum occupasse credibile est. Tacit. vit. Agric. xi.

Britanni non multum à Gallicâ differunt consuetudine. Cæsar, lib. v.

in whom the old inhabitants, if they differed originally from the Gaël, were lost. This revolution in the North of Europe extended to the greater part of its inhabitants the appellation of Celtæ, which is an adjective derived from Gaël, the aboriginal name of the inhabitants of ancient Gaul.

Though the expeditions of the Gauls, subsequent to the settlement of the Phoceans in their country, are the first mentioned in history, we have reason to believe that they pervaded Europe with their migrating armies † in a more remote period of antiquity. They first entered Italy, according to Livy, in the reign of the elder Tarquin: but other writers of good credit affirm that they were, in part, the ancestors of the vagabonds who settled with Romulus on the banks of the Tiber. The Umbri, the most ancient inhabitants of Italy §, were Gauls ||; and from the Umbri the Tuscans and Sabins *, who were the founders of Rome, derive their origin.

Migrations
of the
Celtæ, or
Gaël.

† Ferox natio pervagata bello prope orbem terrarum. Livius, lib: xxxviii.

§ Umbrorum gens antiquissima Italiæ existimatur. Plin. lib. iii.

|| Umbri prima veterum Gallorum proles. Servius in Æneid. xii.

* Zenodotus Træzenius, qui Umbrorum historiam conscripsit, narrat Sabinos pro Umbris appellatos. Dionys, Halic. lib. ii.

It is, upon the whole, evident that the Gaël who inhabited the vast country bounded by the ocean, the Rhine, the Alps, and Pyrenæan mountains, were the ancestors of the Celtæ, the extent of whose dominions we have already described †.

The Cimbri.

The Cimbri
derive their
origin

The domestic improvements which, in the beginning of their progress in Gaul, enabled the inhabitants of that country to overrun the regions of the West and North, had arrived at some degree of maturity long before the Romans penetrated beyond the Alps. Instead of wandering in search of foreign settlements, the Gauls found it more convenient to cultivate those which they already possessed. The spirit of conquest retired further towards the North; and the tide of migration, which had for ages flowed from Gaul, returned upon itself with redoubled violence. The German Celtæ ‡ repassed the Rhine,

† Galli a candore corporis primum appellati sunt. Eucher. Episc. Lugdun. de Gent. iv.—GEAL, in the Gaëlic language signifies *fair*. Ταῖς δὲ σαρκὶ κάθυργοι καὶ λευκοί. Diod. Sic. de Gallis, lib. v.

‡ Celtæ five Galli quos Cimbros vocant. Appian. in Illyr.

Ἰππεὺς δὲ Γαλάτης τὸ γένος, ἢ Κίμβρος. Plutarch in Mario.

committed

committed terrible devastations, and acquired a just title to the name of Cimbri, which signifies a band of robbers §.

The extensive regions between the Rhine and the Baltic were possessed by Galic tribes when Germany ^{from the Celtæ, or Gaël.} became first known to the writers of Rome. An unavoidable mixture with the Sarmatæ beyond the Vistula and the Baltic had an effect on the genius of the Celtæ of Germany; and they departed, in some degree, from the purity of the language and from some of the manners of their ancestors. They however retained so many marks of their Galic origin, that some have thought that the name of Germans proceeded from their similarity in every respect to the inhabitants of Gaul ||.—

More than three centuries prior to the Christian æra, ^{Their migrations and conquests.} the German Celtæ, under the name of Cimbri, ravaged all the regions lying between the Rhine and the Ionian

§ Κίμβροῦς ἐπονομάζουσιν Γερμανοὶ τοῦς λησῆας. Plutarch in Mario.—
Ληστρικοὶ ὄντες καὶ πλανήτες οἱ Κίμβροι. Strabo, lib. vii.

|| Forma et moribus et victu adsimiles sunt Gallorum. Itaque rectè mihi videntur Romani hoc nomen eis indidisse cum eos fratres esse Gallorum vellent ostendere. Strabo, lib. vii.

sea *. They at the same time extended their conquests to Spain and to Great Britain. The Lusitanians, according to Diodorus Siculus, were the most warlike branch of the Cimbri †; and the Welsh retain, in their name, an undoubted mark of their Cimbric extraction. From these revolutions of the Celtæ on the continent we shall, in a subsequent section, deduce the origin of the British nations.

The European Sarmatæ.

Irruption of
the European
Sarmatæ;

The successive migrations of the Barbarians of the North may be compared to the transient storms of a showery day. The Sun scarce returns after one cloud is past, before another begins to gather in the same quarter of heaven. The short space between is filled with that pleasing but melancholy serenity which attends joys whose period is approaching in view.—The first irruption of the nations of the northern Germany happened, as we have already observed, more than three centuries before the commencement of our present æra. About two

* Hæ sunt nationes quæ tam longe ab suis sedibus Delphos profectæ sunt. Cicero pro Fonteio, xx.

† Ἀλκιμώτατοι μὲν ἔσσι οἱ καλούμενοι Λυσιτανοί. Diod. Sic. lib. v.

ages after, the Celtæ beyond the Rhine threw another fleece of adventurers, under the name of Cimbri, into the regions of the South ‡. A new people accompanied them in this expedition, who, in their designation of Teutoni §, carried with them a proof of their Sarmatic origin.

When the Celtæ between the Elb and the Gulph of Bothnia evacuated their territories, and poured into the southern Europe, about forty-five years after the death of Alexander, the Sarmatæ of Scandinavia crossed the Baltic, and settled between the Vistula and the Drave under the general name of Goths || and Vandals *. The Celto-

their progress to the South.

‡ Sexcentesimum et quadragesimum annum urbs nostra agebat cum Cimbrorum audita sunt arma. Tacit. Germ. xxxvii.

§ The learned have thrown away a great deal of useless erudition upon the etymon of this word. It is a Celtic one signifying *northern men*: *Tua* north *taoni* men, a word of the same import with the *Normans* of after ages. The Celtic Germans naturally distinguished the Scandinavian Sarmatæ by a name expressive of the situation of their country.

|| Ex Scanzia insulâ, cum regi suo, nomine Berich, Gothi quondam memorantur egressi. Jornandes de rebus Gothicis.

Meminisse debes, me initio de Scanziae insulæ gremio Gothos dixisse egressos. Jornand. ubi supra.

* Pari etiam modo Vandalorum, ab insula, quæ Scandinavia dicitur, adventavit. Paul. Diacon. lib. i.

Igitur

Celto-Germans who remained beyond the Elb on the shores of the ocean, and in the peninsula of Juteland, gave the name of TEUTONI, or northern men, to the Sarmatæ; who, after having passed from Scandinavia, became their neighbours in Germany. Instead of contending about the possession of the bleak shores of the Baltic, the Cimbri and Teutoni, in close alliance with one another, endeavoured to procure for themselves better settlements in a more favourable climate and soil.

The Scandi-
navian Sar-
matæ

The Teutoni were the first of the Scandinavian Sarmatæ who invaded the South. The calamities which overwhelmed those adventurers in their expedition, discouraged their countrymen for more than two complete centuries from similar attempts. In the reign of Marcus Aurelius, forgetting the misfortunes of their fathers, the Sarmatic Germans advanced into the regions of the South and East †. A new bulwark against their invasion had started up in the power of the Romans. The military discipline of the legions stationed on the frontiers of Pannonia frustrated all the efforts of the Barbarians, and obliged them to content themselves with the cold and sterile seats of their ancestors. But though they

Igitur egressi de Scandinaviâ Vandali. Paul. Diacon. lib. i.

Gothi Vandalique ab antiquis Sarmatis originem ducunt. Procop. Vandal. lib. i.

† *Dio. Cass. lib. lxxi.*

were

were unsuccessful in many succeeding attempts, they never lost sight of the object, till the growing imbecility of the empire opened the South and West to their arms.

The Celtæ beyond the Rhine were either dissipated in the dominions of Rome before the fall of the empire, or afterwards lost in the inundations of the Sarmatic Scandinavians; who, passing over Germany, overwhelmed the regions of the South and West at the decline of the Roman power. The Goths and Vandals who extended their conquests to Spain, Italy, and Africa, were, in some measure, lost in the countries which they subdued. The northern nations, descended from the same stock who trod on their heels when they moved into the provinces of the Roman empire, are the ancestors of the present Germans. The Franks, having confined their migrating expeditions to Gaul, have still preserved their Vandalic name in that country. The Saxons settled in Britain are the most unmixed of the posterity of the Sarmatæ who first settled on the southern shore of the Baltic.

the ancestors of the modern Germans.

The Slavi.

Reflections.

When fate had decreed the fall of the Romans she seemed to create Barbarians for the single purpose of executing her favourite design. Nations appeared suddenly on the frontiers of the empire unheard of by others, and even unknown to themselves. The memory of their former transactions was lost in their own ignorance, and the name of their original seats was as it were forgot in the length of their march. They seemed to move forward under an impression of the inconveniencies they had left at home, more than from the hopes of success abroad; having philosophy enough to prefer the uncertainty of future evils to present misery.

Origin and progress of the Slavi.

The most obscure of those Barbarians who contributed to the destruction of the western empire were the Slavi, whose posterity now possess all the regions between the Euxine and the Frozen Ocean. Under the name of Avari they advanced even as far as Peloponnesus in the fifth century, and under that of Bulgarians they continued their irruptions into the South till the end of the eighth age. Pursuing and flying from one another, in successive migrations, they filled the western Russia, Poland, and the regions near the mouths of the

the Danube, with their colonies ; and, having at last settled in fixed abodes, started up into several powerful nations. Some of them extended themselves as far as Dalmatia and Illyricum, and, at this moment, speak the language of their ancestors on the Adriatic.

The Slavi seem, from their language as well as manners, to derive their origin from the Tartars of the North-East of Asia. They were a very different race of men from the Scandinavian Sarmatæ, the principals in the migrating expeditions which proved fatal to the Roman power. When the Goths, quitting their native seats to the East of the Vistula, had advanced into Rhetia, Gaul, and Italy, the Slavi took possession of their habitations *. Growing numerous in Russia and Poland they extended themselves to the South-West ; and, if we regard their numbers and extent of dominion, they form, at this day, one third of the weight in the scale of Europe.—This short account of the origin of the Slavi, though foreign to our present subject, comes in, with some propriety, in the revolutions which happened of old in the North.

A different
people from
the Euro-
pean Sar-
matæ.

* Ubi ergo Poloniam finem facit, pervenitur ad Slavorum amplissimam provinciam.

Reflections on the Origin of the European Nations.

The Celtæ,
the Sarmatæ,
and
Slavi,

The succinct account given of the state of Ancient Europe lays open the secret springs from which its modern inhabitants derive their blood. The polished nations who now excel antiquity itself in arts, and vie with it in arms, owe their origin to rude Barbarians, whose want of the means of transmitting their history to posterity has perhaps contributed to their fame. The Celtæ, the Sarmatæ, and Slavi, jumbled together by migration, conquest, and accidents of various kinds, formed that great mass which has started up, in the course of ages, into those powerful and illustrious states which figure, at this day, in Europe.

the ancestors of the
European
nations,

Though scarce any one people from the pillars of Hercules to the Tanais are free from a mixture of the three great original nations whom we have so often mentioned, there are regions in that vast extent of country where the blood of each peculiarly prevails. The Celtæ, whom their connection with the Romans had abandoned to conquest in Gaul, Spain, Italy, and its Isles, are the ancestors of the majority of the present inhabitants of those extensive countries. The Sarmatic Vandals, who, under a great variety of national names,

names, succeeded the Romans in the dominion of the South and West, bore no proportion to the conquered. They introduced among their new subjects their own form of government, their own regulations, the haughty ferocity of their character and manners, that want of neatness * which all the improvements of civilized times have not hitherto been able to remove; but the language of the vassals, a certain evidence of their superiority in point of numbers, prevailed, at last, over that of their lords.

In Germany, from the source of the Elb to the proved from Baltic, from the Vistula to the ocean; in England, in a great part of Scotland, the old Scandinavians, with little mixture, prevail. In the kingdoms of Norway and Sweden the blood of the ancient Sarmatæ is tinged with that of the Slavi, who stepped into the vacant habitations of those tribes that successively, for many ages, discharged themselves into the regions of the South from both the shores of the Baltic. The dominions of the Slavi we have already described.

But to wander no further into dissertation: language, ^{their lan-} next to authentic records, is the best evidence of the ^{guage, &c.}

* Sordes Sarmatarum. Tacit. Germ. xlvii.

extract of a people. The modern Europeans, deriving their blood from three very different nations, still preserve among them the three original tongues of their ancestors. These are the Celtic, the Teutonic, and Slavonic, all radically different from one another. Wherever any of these three languages is spoken with most purity, there the blood of the great nation, from which it takes its name, most prevails.

AN
 INQUIRY
 INTO THE
 ORIGIN
 OF THE
 ANCIENT BRITISH NATIONS.

Preliminary Observations.

SHOULD a traveller of ordinary curiosity land at the General
 mouth of the Nile, he might perhaps content himself
 with viewing the fine effect, which that noble river has on
 the appearance of the lower Egypt: One more inquisitive
 might chuse to trace the stream to where it falls from
 the desert into the plains of Thebes: But he, indeed,
 must be uncommonly curious, who would wander in
 search of its source to the Mountains of the Moon *.
 The novelty of the romantic scenes on the way might

* The source of the Nile is said to lie in mountains of that name
 beyond the line.

recompence him for the fatigue of his journey, but mankind would scarce forget the folly of the undertaking in the pleasure of hearing the detail of his discoveries.

observa-
tions,

A writer who penetrates into antiquity to investigate the springs from which a nation has issued, may, in like manner, have his amusement for his labour. Partial to themselves, the bulk of the people regard only those periods of their history which descend nearest to their own times. Satisfied with the renown of latter transactions, they are as indifferent concerning their remote annals and origin as they who profit by the inundations of the Nile are about the distant fountain from which it takes its rise. The traveller, to continue the comparison, has, in some respects, the advantage of the writer; for the sandy deserts of Africa present not a more uncomfortable prospect to the eye than the sterile regions of national antiquities. This consideration, though it shall not prevent, will contribute to shorten the present inquiry.

Britain little
known be-
fore Julius
Cæsar.

Britain, before the arrival of Cæsar, was rather heard of than known. Foreigners had visited its ports in pursuit of commerce; but they took no pains to extend their inquiries to the internal state of the country. The information of the Romans accompanied the progress of their arms; new communities
rose

rose gradually before them as they advanced into the heart of the Island ; till the whole body of its inhabitants came forward distinctly to view, when Agricola carried the Roman eagles to the mountains of Caledonia. But to investigate the origin of our ancestors with precision we must return to a period of more remote antiquity.

The British Isles, from their vicinity to the continent, must, in the nature of things, have been affected by the revolutions which we have in the preceding sections briefly described. The circles, spreading from commotions in the center, must have vibrated, though perhaps faintly, in the extremities of Europe ; and the shock was certainly felt beyond the limits to which conquest and migration actually extended themselves. We can accordingly trace, in lively characters, in Britain, the effect of every great movement made on the continent by the body of the Celtæ before the power of the Romans confined them to fixed abodes.

Affected by
revolutions
on the con-
tinent.

The Gaël.

A conjecture concerning the æra

Whether Britain was inhabited, or rather perambulated, by a race of Barbarians before the Gaël of the continent extended their name with their arms into all the regions of Europe*, is a circumstance which lies buried in impenetrable darkness. The name of Gaël, still retained by the posterity of the most ancient inhabitants of the British Isles, seems to look for its origin to the first great revolution of the Celtæ on the continent. The wild tribes who originally possessed the vast regions bounded by the ocean, the Mediterranean, the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenean mountains, were, as has been already observed, the first of the European Scythians, if we except the Pelasgi of Greece, who formed themselves into distinct communities. Arriving at some degree of civilization, they became overstocked with numbers at home, and they sent armies of emigrants in quest of foreign settlements†. Britain could not fail to attract the early attention of

* Ferox natio Gallorum pervagata bello prope orbem terrarum. Livius, lib. xxxviii.

† Gallia adeo frugum hominumque fertilis fuit, ut abundans multitudo vix regi videretur posse Ambigatus, missurum se esse in quas dii dedissent auguriis sedes, ostendit. Livius, lib. v.

the Gaël. Its vicinity to their original ‡ country, the fertility of its soil §, the mildness of its air and climate *, would have recommended it to that migrating nation in a degree superior to those regions of the West and North, to which, it is well known, they extended themselves in remote antiquity.

It were idle to hope to ascertain the æra in which the first migration of the Gauls into Britain ought to be placed. Its antiquity has left only room for conjecture. We should, in all probability, look for it beyond the establishment of the Phoceans in the district of Massilia. Though it is affirmed, both by Livy and Plutarch †, that the Gauls, for the first time, entered Italy in a hostile manner in the reign of the elder Tarquin, we have reason to believe, that partial emigrations from that nation crossed the Alps many ages before the foundation of Rome itself was laid ||.

‡ Gallos vicinum solum occupasse credibile est. Tacit. Vit. Agric. xi.

§ Solum patiens frugum, fœcundum. Tacit. Vit. Agric. xii.

* Loca sunt temperatiora quam in Gallia, remissioribus frigoribus. Cæsar, lib. v.

Asperitas frigorum abest. Tacit. Vit. Agric. xii.

† Titus Livius, lib. v.

|| Umbrorum gens antiquissima Italiæ existimatur. Plin. lib. iii.

Umbri antiquissimus Italiæ populus. Flor. lib. i.

into Bri-
tain.

The Umbri, who were the most ancient inhabitants of Italy, were the posterity of Gauls who penetrated into that country long before the commencement of history *. We may naturally suppose that the Gauls of Belgium would have found less difficulty in crossing a very narrow channel into Britain than their countrymen at the foot of the Alps in clambering, with their wives and children, over the vast ridge of mountains which separated them from Italy. It may therefore be concluded, that Britain received very considerable colonies from the Belgic division of Gaul as early, at least, as the Gaël of the Alpin regions seized upon Italy under the name of Umbri †. But though it is impossible to fix with precision on the æra of the invasion of Britain by the Gaël, no doubt can remain concerning the existence of the fact itself. The Gaël of Britain and

* Bocchus absolvit Gallorum VETERUM propaginem Umbros esse. Solin. lib. viii.

Umbri prima VETERUM Gallorum proles. August. in Sempron.

Umbros VETERUM Gallorum propaginem esse Marcus Antonius refert. Servius in Æneid. 12^{mo}.

The epithet of VETERES, applied to the Gauls, is perhaps intended to distinguish the progenitors of the Umbri, the old Gaël, from the Cimbri-Germanic Gauls, who, in an after age, pervaded all the regions of Europe.

† The Umbri were the inhabitants of the upper Italy, and they seem to derive their name from the situation of their country. Oambriuch literally signifies the declivity of a ridge of mountains.

Ireland

Ireland retain a proof of their origin in their indigenous name. The writers of antiquity confirm it from every quarter ||, though their information extended not to the period in which that remarkable revolution happened in the Island.

|| Ferocitate excellent Galli qui ad arctum remoti, sicut Britanni a quibus Iris (Hibernia) habitatur. Diod. Sic. v.

Gallis similes sunt, durante originis vi. Tacit. Vit. Agric. xi.

Ingenio Gallorum similes sunt. Strabo, lib. iv.

The Cimbri.

The Cim-
bri.

The Gaël were in possession of Britain for many ages before they were disturbed by a second migration from the continent. The spirit of conquest passing from the Gauls to the Celto-Germanic colonies beyond the Rhine, the latter pervaded Europe with their armies*. We must judge of the æra in which this revolution happened from its effect on those nations who had the means of transmitting their own history, as well as some account of their enemies, to after ages.

Æra of

The German posterity of the Gauls, under the name of Cimbri, traversed, as has been in a preceding section observed, the vast regions between their own country and the sea of Ionia†. About half a century after the death of Alexander, they poured irresistible armies into Greece, Thrace, and Macedonia; the latter of which, though

* Cimbri magnam Europæ nec exiguam Asiæ partem sibi tributariam fecere agrosque debellatorum a se occuparunt. Diod. Sic. lib. v.

† Cimbri contractis undique copiis, ad Ionicum mare conversi, gentem Illyriorum, et quicquid gentium ad Macedonas usque habitat, imo ipsos Macedonas oppressere. Paus. Attic. iv.

recent

recent from the conquest of Asia, they subdued and ruined ‡. In their progress to the South and East they cut to pieces all the intermediate nations § between their original seats and the Hellespont; and some of them, passing the Propontis, filled the lesser Asia with their colonies ||; and spread the terror of their name far and wide by the invincible fortune of their arms*.

The irruption of the Cimbri was not merely depredatory. They left colonies in the conquered countries †, and the manners which their successors, in the same regions, brought down to after-times, was a kind of proof that they exterminated those nations whom they subdued.—Whilst a part of the Cimbri, or Celto-Ger-

‡ Gens aspera, audax, bellicosa, domitis Pannoniis, et hortante deinde successu, divisis agminibus, alii Græciam, alii Macedoniam, omnia ferro proterentes, petivere. Justin. lib. xxiv.

§ Extorres inopia agrorum, profecti domo, per asperrimam Illyrici oram, Pæoniam inde et Thraciam, pugnando cum ferocissimis gentibus, mensi has terras ceperunt. Livius, lib. xxxviii.

|| Tantæ fecunditatis Juventus, ut Asiam omnem velut examine aliquo implerent. Justin, lib. xxv.

* Tantus terror nominis et armorum invicta felicitas. Justin, lib. xxv.

† Agros debellatorum a se occuparunt. Diod. Sic. lib. v.

mans, pushed their conquests to the South and East, others directed their migration to the regions of the West. We find traces of them as far as the extremities of Europe ‡; they were, in some measure, the ancestors of the Lusitanians, and they rose into a mixed nation with the Aborigines of the mountains of Gallicia. In Britain, their very name remains, with their blood, in the Cimbri of Wales.

into Britain.

When some of the Cimbri appeared on the frontiers of Greece, others drove the ancient Gaël from the Belgic division of Gaul. Cæsar observes, that the Belgæ were the posterity of German emigrants who settled in ancient times to the South of the Rhine, on account of the fertility of the soil §. Descrying, from their new settlements, the Island of Britain, they passed the narrow channel which divides it from the continent, and the Gaël, who had diffused themselves over all the Island, contracted their limits towards the South to give room to those new interlopers.

‡ Omnium Cimbrorum fortissimi sunt Lusitani. Diod. Sic. lib. v.

§ Reperiebat Cæsar Belgas esse ortos ab Germanis Rhenum antiquitus transductos, propter loci fertilitatem ibi confedisse; Gallosque qui ea loca incolerent, expulisse. Cæsar, lib. ii.

The

The Cimbri who remained in Gaul became afterwards to be distinguished by the name of Belgæ. As that appellation carries reproach in its meaning, it is likely that it was imposed on that warlike nation by the Gaël whom they had expelled from their territories. Etymon of Belgæ. BALGE or BALGEN, in the ancient Celtic signifies a spotted or party-coloured herd; and, in a metaphorical sense, a mixed people, or an aggregate of many tribes. The name alludes either to Belgium's being peopled promiscuously by the German tribes, or to the unavoidable mixture of the Celtic colonies beyond the Rhine with the Sarmatæ of the East and North.

The Belgæ.

The Belgæ.

When the Romans carried their arms into Britain, the whole Island was possessed by three nations sprung originally, though at very different periods, from the Gaël of the continent. Two of these we have already described; the third falls now under consideration.—The Celto-Germanic tribes, who had driven the old Gaël from Belgium, settling in that division of Gaul, rose, in process of time, into a variety of petty states. Each of these, some time before the arrival of Cæsar, sent colonies into Britain §; which, according to the testimony of the illustrious writer, retained the names of the small communities on the continent from which they respectively derived their origin ||. The Cimbri, who had passed into Britain about three centuries prior to our æra, retiring from the pressure of these new invaders, possessed the country to the West of the Severn, and that which extended from the Humber to the Tweed. The Gaël, under the general name of Caledonians, inhabited the rest of the Island to the extremity of the North.

§ Maritima pars ab iis qui ex Belgis transferant. Cæsar, lib. v.

|| Omnes fere (Belgæ in Britannia) iis nominibus civitatum appellantur, quibus orti ex civitatibus eo pervenerunt. Cæsar, lib. v.

It

It is difficult to ascertain the æra of this third migration from the continent. We ought to place it perhaps half a century prior to the arrival of Cæsar. Divitiacus, king of the Sueffiones, who flourished before that great commander, may probably have transplanted from Gaul those tribes in Britain over whom he reigned.—The Belgæ, when they transmigrated into Britain, brought with them those arts of civil life which had made a considerable progress in Gaul before they left that country. The inhabitants of the maritime regions opposite to Gaul had almost attained to an equal pitch of cultivation with their brethren on the continent*. They sowed corn, they had fixed abodes, and some degree of commerce was carried on in their ports.

The æra of
their arrival
in Britain.

This superior civilization rendered them objects of depredation to the Cimbri who had retired to the North and West from the pressure of the Belgæ. The Cimbri, it is probable, had remained in the same rude barbarity which their ancestors brought with them from Belgium. Recent injuries joined issue with their love of depredation. They made frequent incursions into the Belgic

The Bri-
gantes

* Ex his omnibus longe humanissime sunt qui Cantium incolunt; quæ regio est maritima omnis: neque multum a Gallica differunt consuetudine. Cæsar, lib. v.

F

dominions;

dominions; and it was from that circumstance that the Cimbri beyond the Humber derived their name of Brigantes, which signifies a race of freebooters and plunderers †.

and Silures
were Cim-
bri.

The Silures on the western banks of the Severn were the most considerable tribe of the British Cimbri. They varied so much from the Belgæ, that Tacitus justly concluded that they were, in some measure, a different race of men. To deduce them from Spain was certainly an error. It is not in any degree probable that, in so early a period, the Spaniards, who were never a sea-faring people, could transport themselves over an immense ocean into Britain: Besides, the posterity of the Silures have come down to the present times; and, in their indigenous name of Cimbri, vindicate their origin ‡.

† On lui donna ce nom à cause des pillages qu'il faisoit sur les terres de ses voisins. BRIGAND OU BRIGANT, Brigand, Pillard, voleur de grand-chemin. Bullet Memoires sur la Lang. Celt. tom. i.

‡ SIOL a race of men, URUS the river emphatically, in allusion to their situation beyond the Severn.

Observations

Observations on the Three British Nations.

The three great British nations, whose origin we have endeavoured to investigate, must have differed considerably from one another in language, manners, and character. Though descended from the same source, their separation into different channels was very remote. The Gaël who possessed the northern Britain, by the name of Caledonians, having passed from the continent before the arts of civil life had made any considerable progress among them, retained the pure but unimproved language of their ancestors together with their rude simplicity of manners.

The Gaël,
Cimbri, and
Belgæ,

The British Cimbri derived their origin from the Galic colonies who, in remote antiquity, had settled beyond the Rhine. These, with a small mixture of the Sarmatæ, returned, in all their original barbarism, into the regions of the South. During their separation from their mother nation, their language and manners must have suffered such a considerable change, that it is extremely doubtful whether their dialect of the Celtic and that of the old British Gaël were, at the arrival of the former in this Island, reciprocally understood by both

though descended from
the Celtic
stock,

nations.—The third colony differed in every thing from the Gaël and Cimbri. Their manners were more humanized; and their tongue, though perhaps corrupted, was more copious. They had left the continent at a period of advanced civility. Their character changed with the progress of the arts of civil life; and new inventions had introduced new words and new expressions into their language.

spoke three
different
dialects.

But though the three nations who possessed the British Isles at the arrival of the Romans spoke three distinct dialects, and differed materially from one another in the formation of their phrases, and construction of their sentences, the radical words used by all were certainly the same. The names of places in the Roman Britain, however much disguised they may have been by the orthography of the writers of the empire, may be, with great facility, traced to their original meaning in the language spoken to this day by the posterity of the Gaël in the northern Britain*.

To

* Cantium, *Kent*; *Canti*, end of the Mland.

Trinobantes, *Trion-oban*, marshy district; the inhabitants of Middlesex and Essex.

Durotrigæ, *Dur-treig*, the sea-tribe; the inhabitants of the coast of Dorsetshire, in allusion to their situation.

Dobuni

To descend into a minute detail of the various petty tribes into which the three British nations were subdivided, would neither furnish instruction nor amusement. The Cimbri and Belgæ, falling under the power of the Romans soon after they were mentioned by historians, were lost in the general name of Britons; and the internal state of the Gaël of North Britain and Ireland is covered with that impenetrable cloud which invariably involves illiterate nations who lie beyond the information of foreign writers.

Dobuni, *Dobb-buini*; living on the bank of the river: they who of old possessed the county of Gloucester, alluding to their situation on the banks of the Severn.

Belerium, *Bel-eir*; Western-rock: Cape Cornwall.

Dimatæ, *Di-moi-atta*; inhabitants of the southern plain: The tribe of Cimbri who possessed the counties of Caermarthen, Pembroke, and Cardigan.

Ordovices, *Ord-tuavich*; northern mountaineers: The inhabitants of North Wales.

Ancient Names of Britain.

Observa-
tions.

Having briefly investigated the origin of the people, it may not be improper to inquire into the name of the country. Etymology is a science frequently full of deception, and always unentertaining and dry. But as the Author of the Introduction returns back into antiquity with some advantages which men of greater abilities have not possessed, he hopes to be, in some measure, satisfactory on this subject.

The ety-
mon of
Albion

Alba or Albin, the name of which the ancient Scots, in their native language, have, from all antiquity, distinguished their own division of Britain, seems to be the fountain from which the Greeks deduced their Albion. It was natural for the Gaël, who transmigrated from the low plains of Belgium, to call the more elevated land of Britain by a name expressive of the face of the country. ALB or ALP, in the Celtic, signifies High, and IN invariably, a Country.—The name of Albion being imposed upon the Island by the Gaël, the first colony was
known

known before the appellation which the Romans latinized into Britannia.

The Cimbri, the second Celtic colony who passed and of into Britain, arriving in Belgium, and descrying Albion, gave it a new name expressive of the same idea which first suggested the appellation of Albion to the Gaël. Comparing the elevated coast of Britain to the fenny plains of the lower Germany, they called it BRAIT-AN, a word compounded of BRAIT high, and AN or IN a country *.

This new name never extended itself to the Gaël of Britain. North Britain; and the posterity of the Cimbri have lost it in the progress of time. The Scottish and Irish Gaël have brought down the name of Alba or Albin to the present age; the Welsh use no general appellation. The æra of its imposition ought to be fixed as far

* La Bretagne peut aussi avoir tiré son nom de sa grande étendue. *Brayd* ou *Brait* signifie vaste, le plus grand. *An Isle Bretan*, la plus grande Isle. *Memoires sur la Langue Celtique*, tom. i. But as it is extremely doubtful whether Britain was known to be an Island at the arrival of the Cimbri, we must take *Brait* in its original sense, signifying *High*; as in *Braid-Albin*, *High-Albany*, the most elevated district in North Britain.

back as the arrival of the Cimbri in the Island. The Phœnicians of Gades and the Massilian Phœceans, who traded to the ports of Britain, learned the name of the natives, and communicated it to the writers of Greece and Rome.

ANCIENT

A N C I E N T S C O T S .

Preliminary Reflections.

I N proportion as we travel northward in ancient Britain, the darkness, which involves the antiquities of its inhabitants, thickens before us. The Cimbri and Belgæ, after they were comprehended within the pale of the Roman dominions, were seen distinctly ; but the more ancient inhabitants of the island, the Gaël, appeared only transiently, when, in an hostile manner, they advanced to the frontiers of the province. The arms of the empire penetrated, at different periods, into the heart of the country beyond the Scottish friths ; but as these expeditions were not attended with absolute conquest, and a consequent settlement of colonies, the Romans made little inquiry concerning the origin and history of the natives of the northern division of Britain.

Origin of
the Caledo-
nians unin-
vestigated.

Julius Agricola, who, for the first time, displayed the Roman eagles beyond the friths, was not more successful in the field than he was happy in an historian to transmit his actions with lustre to posterity. But even the distinct and intelligent Tacitus gives but a very imperfect idea of those enemies, by the defeat of whom his father-in-law acquired so much reputation.

By the Ro-
mans.

We learn from him indeed that the Caledonians were the most ancient inhabitants of Britain, that they were brave and numerous, that, though overcome in the field by the discipline of the Roman legions, they were far from being reduced into any subjection which could deserve the name of conquest.

Their history

After Agricola was removed from the government of Britain, the writers of the empire for some years lost sight of the Caledonians. The incursions of those Barbarians into the province, forced both Adrian* and Antoninus Pius† to construct walls, at an immense labor and expence, to exclude their ravages. In the reign of Commodus neither walls or the military abilities and conduct of Ulpus Marcellus ‡ could prevent them from laying waste the northern division of the Roman Britain, till Severus, about the beginning of the third century, carried the war into their country with a numerous army. This is the sum of what the Romans have related concerning the Caledonians for near two centuries after they were first mentioned: To their origin

* Murum per octoginta millia passuum primus duxit qui Barbaros (Caledonios) Romanosque divideret. Spartian. in Hadriano, xi.

† Britannos per Lollium Urbicum legatum vicit, alio muro cespitio submotis Barbaris ducto. Jul. Capitolin. in Antonino, v.

‡ Μέγιστος δὲ ὁ Βρεττανικός. Τῶν γὰρ ἐν τῇ νησῷ ἔθνων ὑπὲρ βεβηκότων το τεῖχος. . . . καὶ πολλὰ κακουργοῦντων, σφαλιγόν τε τινα μέτ᾽ τῶν σφαλιγῶν οὓς εἶχε καλᾶ-κοψάντων, φοβηθεὶς ὁ Κόμμεδος, Μάρκελλον Ὀυλπίου ἐπ' αὐτὰς ἐπεμψεν. Dio. Cass. lib. lxxii.

and internal history the writers of Rome were equally strangers.

This defect in foreign writers, with regard to the ancient inhabitants of North Britain, is not supplied by any authentic monuments of their own. The Caledonians were not more destitute of the means of preserving their history in the intermediate century between Agricola and Severus, than their posterity were for a considerable time after the Romans had relinquished the dominion of Britain. The climate and soil of Caledonia were far from being favourable to internal civilization ; and a ferocity of manners, arising from an uninterrupted series of hostilities, effectually prevented the introduction of the arts of civil life from abroad.

But when the Scots look back with regret upon that want of letters which has involved in obscurity and fable the origin and history of their ancestors, they ought to consider that it was, perhaps, from this circumstance arose that national independence which they transmitted to their posterity. Had the Romans established themselves in Caledonia, we might indeed have known more of the ancient inhabitants of that country ; but it is much to be doubted whether the Scots of this age should have been more concerned in their history, than the English of Middlesex and Essex are in the

transactions of the Trinobantes, who possessed those counties in the time of Julius Cæsar. The Romans, it is true, introduced the arts of civil life into the countries which they subdued; but with those arts came in slavery, and a consequent imbecillity of mind, which, in the end, abandoned the vassals, as well as their lords, to conquest, and even to extirpation.

Scots destitute of ancient domestic writers.

The first domestic writers of the history of North Britain were too ignorant, as well as too modern, to form any probable system concerning the origin of their nation. Destitute of records at home, they found themselves obliged to fill up the void in their antiquities with tales which had been growing in Ireland, for some ages before, on the hands of a succession of ignorant Bards and Fileas. After the study of critical learning was prosecuted with success among other nations, what part of it extended to Scotland was only employed to remove some of the absurdities of the old fables, and not levelled in a manly manner against the whole of that fabric of fiction which had so long dishonoured the antiquities of that country.

Inaccuracy and indolence of their modern historians.

The ingenious father Innes was the first of the Scots who had the courage to attack that puerile system of their origin, which his countrymen had for many ages adopted. He wrested the sceptre of Scotland from the

first Fergus, and thirty-nine of the ideal successors of that pretended monarch, and passing over into Ireland discomfited that motley army of Bards, Fileas, and Senachies, which had been so long fortifying itself in rhimes, traditions, and fabulous records. But Innes was more successful in destroying the indigested accounts of others, than in establishing a more rational system of his own. Setting out upon wrong principles, and being an utter stranger to the Galic language, he fell into unavoidable mistakes; and endeavoured to obtrude upon the world opinions, concerning the origin of the Scots, no less improbable than those tales which he had exploded with so much success. Though Scotland has of late years produced men distinguished for their talent in historical disquisition, none of them has thought proper to search for the genuine origin and history of his ancestors among those fables which obscure the antiquities of the nation. Possessed of parts, perhaps, too valuable to be employed in investigations of that kind, they hastened to important periods of history where their abilities might with lustre be displayed.

A learned Clergyman *, in one of the Scottish Isles, reduced lately into form and precision the antiquities which Innes had left in confusion and disorder. Had the ingenious writer extended his remarks as far as he

* Dr. John Macpherson, Minister of Slate in the Isle of Sky.

might

might have been enabled to do by his erudition and great knowledge of all the branches of the Celtic language, there should, perhaps, be very little occasion for this Essay. His observations are so judicious, and his arguments so conclusive, on several points of this subject, that to give him the merit of being the best antiquary that has treated of the origin of the Scots, is too small a tribute to his memory.

Origin of the Scots.

General reflections on the origin of the Scots.

It is unnecessary to controvert the opinion of Cornelius Tacitus concerning the origin of the ancient inhabitants of North Britain *. The name by which the celebrated writer himself distinguishes their country, is sufficient to demonstrate that they came from a very different quarter of the continent than what he supposed. When the arms of the empire under Julius Agricola laid open all the nations of Britain to the enquiry of the Romans, it has been already observed that the whole island was possessed by three nations, whom Tacitus endeavours to deduce from communities on the continent very distant from one another. The posterity of two of those nations preserve, to this day, in their names, proofs that altogether subvert this opinion. The

* Rutilæ Caledoniam habitantium comæ, magni artus, Germanicam originem asseverant. Tacit. Vit. Agric. cap. xi.

Silures or Cumri of the south, it has already appeared, had a much better title to a Germanic extraction than the Gaël of Caledonia.

The Gaël, or ancient Gauls, having transmigrated from the continent at a period when the arts of civil life had made but very little progress among them, must have maintained themselves chiefly by hunting; and we may suppose, that in pursuit of their game they soon extended themselves to the northern extremity of the island. A people whose subsistence arises chiefly from the chase are never numerous; it is consequently natural to believe that the Cimbri met with little opposition from the Gaël, when the former passed from the continent and seized upon the southern division of Britain.

In proportion as the Cimbri advanced towards the north, the Gaël, being circumscribed within narrower limits, were forced to transmigrate into the islands which crowd the northern and western coasts of Scotland. It is in this period, perhaps, we ought to place the first great migration of the British Gaël into Ireland; that kingdom being much nearer to the promontory of Galloway and Cantyre, than many of the Scottish isles are to the continent of North Britain. This vicinity of Ireland had probably drawn partial emigrations

A colony
of Gauls

gradually
advance
into North
Britain, and
transmigrate
into Ireland.

tions from Caledonia before the arrival of the Cimbri in Britain; but when these interlopers pressed upon the Gaël from the south, it is reasonable to conclude that numerous colonies passed over into an island so near, and so much superior to their original country in climate and fertility.

Forced
northward
by the Bel-
gæ.

The inhabitants of the maritime regions of Gaul crossing, in an after age, the British Channel *, established themselves on that part of our island which lies nearest to the continent; and, moving gradually towards the north, drove the Cimbri beyond the Severn and Humber. The Gaël of the north, reduced within limits still more circumscribed by the pressure of the Cimbri, sent fresh colonies into Ireland, while the Scottish friths became a natural and strong boundary towards the south to those Gaël who remained in Britain.

Formed into
a nation.

It was, perhaps, after the Belgic invasion of the southern Britain, that the Gaël of the northern division formed themselves into a regular community, to repel the incroachment of the Cimbri upon their territories.

* *Maritima pars* (Britanniæ) *ab iis*, qui prædæ ac belli inferendi causa, ex Belgis transfierant: et bello illato ibi remanserunt, atque agros colere cœperunt. Cæsar de Bell. Gall. lib. v.

To the country which they themselves possessed they gave the name of CAËL-DOCH, which is the only appellation the Scots, who speak the Galic language, know for their own division of Britain. CAËL-DOCH is a compound made up of GAEL or CAËL, the first colony of the ancient Gauls who transmigrated into Britain, and DOCH, a district or division of a country. The Romans, by transposing the letter L in CAËL, and by softening into a Latin termination the CH of DOCH, formed the well-known name of Caledonia. Obvious as this etymon of Caledonia appears, it was but very lately discovered*. Those who treated of the antiquities of North Britain were utter strangers to that only name by which the Scots distinguished the corner of Britain which their ancestors possessed from the remotest antiquity. From an ignorance, so unpardonable in antiquaries, proceeded that erroneous system of the origin of the Scots, which, for many ages, has been, with so much confidence, obtruded on the world.

Concerning the internal state of Caledonia, and the division of its inhabitants into various tribes in a very early period, we can find nothing certain. The account

Internal history unknown.

* This etymon first occurred to the Author of this Essay, and he communicated it to Dr. Macpherson, who adopted it from a conviction of its justness.

given by Ptolemy of the Epidii, Carini, Cantæ, Logæ, and other nations, is little to be regarded. Tacitus passed over those petty communities in silence; and in the period between the expedition of Julius Agricola, and the reign of Marcus Aurelius, under whom the Egyptian geographer flourished, the Romans had no opportunity of being acquainted with the domestic arrangements of the Caledonians.

Their boundaries.

Though the Scottish friths are generally allowed to have been the boundaries of Caledonia towards the South, it is more than probable that those tribes who possessed the country between the walls were principally descended from the ancient Gaël. The names of the Selgovæ and Gadeni, two petty communities on the northern banks of the Solway and Tweed, seem to strengthen this supposition. They carry in their signification a proof that the tribes who bore them were in a state of hostility with their neighbours the Ottadini and Brigantes, which furnishes a presumption that they derived their origin from a different quarter*.

* SELGOVÆ is plainly SELGOVICH latinized. SELGOVICH literally signifies *hunters*, in a metaphorical sense *plunderers*; a name by which their successors in the same country ought to have been distinguished till within little more than a century back. GADENI is plainly from *Gadechin*, *robbers*; a name which arose from the same love of depredation with their friends and neighbours the Selgovæ.

But

But as that tract of country which is comprehended <sup>The Mæ-
atæ.</sup> between the Tweed and Solway, and the Scottish friths, was more exposed to invasion than Caledonia, we may conclude that the Gaël who possessed it were, in some degree, mixed with the Cimbric Ottadini and Brigantes, even before the invasions of the Romans pressed those tribes towards the North. It was from this unavoidable mixture that the Selgovæ, Gadeni, Damnii, and Novantes, were, in an after age, distinguished by the name of Mæataæ, which signifies a people descended from a double origin, as well as the inhabitants of a controverted country *.

* MOI-ATTA, or MOI-ATICH, the inhabitants of the plains: MÆAN-ATTA, the possessors of the middle country: MOAI-ATTA, a mixed people. Δύο δὲ γένη τῶν Βρεττανῶν μέγιστά ἐῖσι, Καληδόνιοι καὶ Μαιάται. καὶ ἐς αὐτὰ καὶ τὰ τῶν ἄλλων προσήματα (ὡς εἰπεῖν) συγκεχώρηκεν. Οἰκοῦσι δὲ οἱ μὲν Μαιάται πρὸς αὐτῷ τῷ διατειχίσματι, ὃ τὴν νήσον διχῇ τέμνει· Καληδοὶ δὲ μετ' ἐκείνους. Dion. Cass. lxxvi.

THE ANCIENT IRISH.

Origin of the Irish.

Ireland first
peopled
from Bri-
tain,

THE origin of the ancient British nations being investigated, little difficulty can remain in tracing the old Irish to their genuine source. The vicinity of Ireland to two promontories in the northern Britain, furnishes a strong presumption that the inhabitants of the former transmigrated, in an early period, from the latter*. Besides, there is not a fact concerning any nation, beyond the pale of the Roman empire, better established by the testimony of writers of unquestionable authority, than the British extraction of the old Irish.

proved from
foreign writ-
ters;

The ancients with one voice agreed to give to Ireland the appellation of a British Island†. Ptolemy calls it the lesser Britain, and Strabo in his Epitome gives the name of Britons to its inhabitants. Diodorus Siculus‡ mentions it as a fact well known in his time, that the

* L'Irlande est si voisine de la Grande Bretagne qu'on persuade aisément qu'elle lui doit ses premiers habitants. Bullet Mem. sur la Langue Celtique.

† Camden in Hibernia, cap. i.

‡ Ἀγριώτατων δὲ ὄντων (Gallorum) τῶν ὑπὸ τὰς ἀρχαίους καλοῦντων Φασὶ τινὰς ἀνθρώπους εἶναι, ὥσπερ καὶ τῶν Βρεττανῶν τοὺς καλοῦντας τὴν ὀνομαζομένην Ἰρίν. Diod. Sic. lib. v.

Irish

Irish were of British extract, as well as that the Britons themselves derived their blood from the Gauls. Cornelius Tacitus affirms that the nature and manners of the Irish did not, in the days of Domitian, differ much from the Britons *; and many foreign writers of great authority give their testimony to the British descent of the old inhabitants of Ireland †.

The most romantic abettors of the fabulous system of Irish antiquities durst not deny a fact so well ascertained from every quarter. They acknowledged, on the authority of the Hibernian Senachies, that British colonies, a short time after the universal deluge, transmigrated into Ireland from North-Britain. But these ill-fated Britons, like many other interlopers from various parts of the world, who succeeded them in Ireland, had the misfortune to fall under the displeasure of the Senachies, and were inhumanly exterminated, to make room for the Milesian Scots, so famous in the fictions and rhimes of the Bards.

acknowledged by domestic antiquaries.

* *Ingenia cultusque hominum haud multum a Britannia differunt.* Tacit. Vit. Agric. cap. 24.

† Festus Avienus shews, from Dionysius, where he treats of the British Isles, that Ireland was peopled by Britons.

*Hæ numero geminæ, pingues Solo, cespitis ampli,
Dira Britannorum sustentant agmina terris.*

"Αἱ Βρετανίδες εἰσι δύο νῆσοι, Οὐερνία καὶ Αλουϊόν, ἧτοι Βερνία καὶ Αλβίων. Eustath. ad Dionys. Perieg.—'Ιουερνία ἡ Πρετανικὴ νησὸς τῶν δύο ελασσῶν. Stephan. de Urb.

The British
Gael
the ancestors of the
Irish.

It is little to the purpose to enquire whether the Scythian Nomades, who, prior to the migrations of the Gauls, wandered over the vast regions of Europe, found their way into Ireland from the nearest promontories of Britain. The name of GAËL, still retained by the old Irish, sufficiently demonstrates that they derive their blood from those Gaël or Gauls, who, in an after period, were distinguished in Britain by the name of Caledonians. The wildest enthusiasts in Hibernian antiquities never once asserted that the Caledonians, or their posterity the Picts, were of Irish extract; yet nothing is better ascertained than that the ancient Britons of the South gave to the Scots, the Picts, and the Irish, the common name of Gaël*; and consequently that they very justly concluded that the three nations derived their origin from the same source, the ancient GAËL of the continent.

Conjecture
concerning
the time of
their trans-
migration.

The British Gaël, in an early age, extending themselves to the very extremities of the Island, descried Ireland from the Mulls of Galloway and Cantire, and

* Mr. O'Connor, who lately gave to the public some wild, incoherent tales, concerning the ancient Irish, endeavours to obviate the strength of the argument, which rises against his system from the name of GAËL, by disguising the word, by the insertion of the intermediate letters, *Db*, as thus, *Gadbel*. The subterfuge avails nothing. *Db* are universally quiescent, or at most sound like a *Y*, in every dialect of the Celtic language.

crossing

crossing the narrow channel which separates the two countries, became the progenitors of the Irish nation. In proportion as fresh emigrants from the continent of Europe forced the ancient Gaël towards the North in Britain, more colonies transmigrated into Ireland from the promontories which we have so often mentioned. It is probable that it was after the arrival of the Cimbri in Britain, a number of the GAËL, sufficient to deserve the name of a nation, settled themselves in Ireland. But they became so numerous in that country before the arrival of the Belgæ in Britain, that the colonies which transmigrated from that nation into Ireland were, together with their language, manners, and customs, lost in the Gaël; so that in one sense the Caledonians may be reckoned the sole progenitors of the old Irish *.

When the Gaël arrived first in Ireland they naturally gave it the name of IAR-IN †, or the western country, in contradistinction to their original settlements in Bri-

Etymon of
the name of
Erin;

* The Firbolg, so often mentioned in the traditions of the Irish, were Belgic colonies who transmigrated from Britain after the Belgæ had seized on the southern division of England. They are mentioned very frequently under the name of *Siol na m Bolga* in the poems of Ossian.

† IAR-IN, or as the Irish pronounce the word, EIR-IN, is compounded of *Iar*, West; and *In*, Island. EIR-IN is the name which the natives, in all ages, gave to Ireland.

tain.

tain. From IAR-IN is not only to be deduced the EIRIN of the Irish themselves, but those various names by which the Greeks and Romans distinguished their Island *. The appellation of IAR-IN was not altogether confined to Ireland by the Gaël of North Britain. They gave it also to those numerous Islands which crowd the western coasts of Caledonia; but when by degrees they became acquainted with the vast extent of Ireland, when compared to the other Scottish Isles, they called it by an emphasis H'IARIN, or H'EIRIN, the western country or island §.

and of
Hibernia.

Hibernia, the most common name by which the Romans distinguished Ireland, may appear to some too remote in the pronunciation and orthography from IAR-IN, or H'EIRIN, to be derived from either. This difficulty is easily removed. Julius Cæsar mentions, for the first time, Ireland under the name of Hibernia. One of two reasons induced the illustrious writer to use that appellation. He either latinized the H'YVERDHON of the southern Britains, or, what is

* Juverna, Ierna, Iris, Ουερνια, Hibernia.

§ The proper and more ancient general appellation of the Scottish Isles is IAR-IN, and from that name, as shall hereafter appear, Claudian derived his Ierna. After the conquest of the Hebrides by Harold Harfager king of Norway, the whole string of islands which stretch along the western shores of North Britain, were called by the Scots on the continent, *Inch-Gaul*, or the Islands of Foreigners.

more probable, he annexed to Ireland a name which suited his own ideas of its air and climate. The Romans, long after the expedition of Cæsar, entertained a very unfavourable opinion of the climate of Ireland; Strabo thought that the severity of the weather rendered that Island extremely uncomfortable*, and Pomponius Mela was told that corn never ripened there on account of the inclemency of the seasons†. The attention of Cæsar was engaged by much more important objects than in informing himself minutely concerning the climate of a country to which he never intended to carry his arms. If Strabo and Mela, whose subject led to enquiries of that kind, supposed that the air of Ireland was extremely intemperate, it is no wonder that Cæsar should have fallen into a similar mistake; and we may from this circumstance conclude that he formed the name of Hibernia from the adjective Hibernus. He thought that a perpetual winter reigned in Ireland; and he was informed that, in the lesser islands in the neighbourhood, one winter night was equal to thirty in Italy‡.

* Strabo, lib. ii.

† Supra Britanniam Javerna est coeli ad maturanda semina iniqui. Pomp. Mela, lib. iv.

‡ Qua ex parte est Hibernia complures præterea minores objectæ Insulæ existimantur; de quibus insulis nonnulli scripserunt dies continuos xxx sub bruma esse noctem. Cæsar de Bell. Gall. lib. v.

Letters unknown in Ancient Ireland.

Observa-
tions.

A deduction of the etymon of Hibernia from another fountain gave birth, perhaps, to a system concerning the origin of the Irish, diametrically opposite to that which we mean to establish. The world are well acquainted with the pretensions which the Irish have made, for many ages, to very high antiquities, as well as to an original very different from the other inhabitants of the British Isles. Instead of transmigrating from the nearest continent, in the natural progress of migration, it seems that the first colonies came to Ireland, across an immense ocean, at a period when the rude navigation of the other nations of Europe scarcely enabled them to waft themselves over rivers and narrow arms of the sea.

Pretensions
of the old
Irish to let-
ters.

To support this improbable tale, another was formed no less incredible in itself than the fact it was meant to ascertain. The fabricators of the Irish antiquities found that an early knowledge of letters in their country was absolutely necessary to gain credit to the system which they so much wished to establish. Ireland therefore was made the seat of polite literature many ages before Greece itself rose out of ignorance and barbarity. To remove this support from the antiquities of the Irish, is

to destroy at once that whole fabric of fiction, which they possess for their ancient history.

The art of perpetuating ideas, and of transmitting Reflections. the wisdom of one age to another, is the first means of civilizing mankind out of their natural ferocity and barbarity. When some certain marks are found to send down the memory of inventions and transactions through a series of generations, a nation becomes polished in proportion to the length of time it has been in possession of that art. Before the Phœnicians taught the use of the alphabet to the Ionians *, Peloponnesus and the Islands of Greece were possessed by tribes as obscure and contemptible as those wild Indians, who wander through the forests of America. The progress of the Greeks towards the figure which they make in history, accompanied the gradual cultivation of polite learning in their country; and we find, that from a possession of letters for a few centuries, they arrived at such a pitch of civilization, that it was not without reason they distinguished other nations by the name of Barbarians.

As the Irish pretend to have been even before the Greeks †, in point of time, with regard to the reception of letters, we ought naturally to expect that they Pretended civility of the old Irish,

* Gentium consensus tacitus, primus omnium conspiravit ut Ionum literis uterentur. Plin. lib. vii.

† Kennedy's Genealogy, pref. p. 26.

became civilized in a very early period. The annals of Ireland are accordingly full of the progress of civility, and the encouragement given to polite learning in that country, many ages before any other nation in Europe extricated itself from the shades of ignorance and barbarity. But these annals deserve little credit on a matter of such high antiquity. The Psalter Cashel, the oldest record of the Irish transactions, was written in the latter end of the tenth age, more than two thousand years after the pretended importation of letters into Ireland.

confuted
from the
testimony of

The only credible accounts of the manners of the old Irish, as well as of the other barbarous nations of Europe, must be derived from the writers of Rome; and these do not go beyond the commencement of the Christian æra, which is, at least, a thousand years posterior to the period assigned by the Irish for the introduction of learning among their ancestors. Unfortunately for the Hibernian system of antiquities, by the testimony of foreign writers who extended their enquiries to Ireland, the character of its ancient inhabitants is utterly incompatible with that civilization which invariably accompanies any knowledge of letters*.

Strabo is the first writer who mentions any particulars concerning the manners of the old Irish. His account

* Innes' Critical Essay, p. 428.

differs in no respect from the relations we have of the ^{Strabo,} most unpolished savages of Africa and America. In one place* he affirms, that Ireland, which lies near Britain, is possessed by a race of men altogether wild and unpolished; and in another he not only says that the Irish were much more barbarous than the Britons, but he even mentions several instances of their brutal ferocity of manners which decency obliges us to leave under the veil of a dead language †.

The testimony of Diodorus Siculus is not more ^{Diodorus Siculus,} favourable, than that of Strabo, to the national character of the Irish. They were in the days of that writer so far from being civilized by a long possession of letters, that they were thought to feed upon human bodies. The authority of Diodorus not only destroys the fiction of the early knowledge of letters in Ireland, but also ruins that system of antiquities, to support which, the fiction itself was first framed. He shews

* "Αγρίων τελεως ανθρωπων. Strabo, lib. ii.

† "Αγριώτεροι τῶν Βρεττανῶν "Ανθρωποφάγαι, πολυφάγοι, τὲ δυντες, τοὺς τὲ πατέρας τηλευτήσαντας κατεσθίεν ἐν καλῷ τιθέμενοι, καὶ φανερώς μίσγεσθαι ταῖς τὲ ἄλλαις γυναῖξι, καὶ μητράσι, καὶ ἀδελφαῖς. Agrestissimi omnium Britannorum (sunt Hiberni) homines edunt, plurimum cibi vorant; pro honesto ducunt mortuorum parentum corpora comedere, et palam concubitant inire cum matribus et sororibus. Strabo, lib. iv. It is but justice to observe that Strabo does not vouch for the authenticity of the above account; but it is impossible to suppose that even the report of such barbarity could exist, had the Irish been more humanized than their Celtic brethren in Britain.

that

that the Irish, so far from coming from a distant country, were a branch of those Gauls who had possessed themselves of Britain in the period we have already assigned ‡.

Pomponius
Mela,

The account given of the Irish by Pomponius Mela is extremely unfavourable to their pretended civilization by a long possession of letters. He calls them a race of men unpolished, barbarous, and ignorant of every virtue*.

Cornelius
Tacitus,

Cornelius Tacitus, after having described those rude tribes in Britain whom the Romans had not humanized, observes, that the inhabitants of Ireland did not differ much in their manners from the Britons †. Neither was the national character of the old Hibernians mended at all in the second or third century ‖,

Julius Soli-
nus,

when Julius Solinus stigmatized them with the epithets of rude, inhuman, and inhospitable, a race of men

‡ Ἀγριωτάτων δὲ Γαλαλῶν τῶν ὑπο τὰς ἄρκλους κατοικούντων φασὶ τινὰς ἀνθρώπους ἐσθίειν, ὥσπερ καὶ τῶν Βρεττανῶν τοὺς τὰ τοῖκοντας τὴν ὀνομαζομένην Ἴριν. Ferocissimi Gallorum sunt qui sub septentrionibus habitant; dicunt ex his nonnullos Anthropophagos esse sicut Britannos qui Irim incolunt. Diod. Sic. lib. v.

* Cultores ejus (Hiberniæ) inconditi, et omnium virtutum ignari. Pomp. Mela, lib. iv.

† Ingenia cultusque hominum non multum a Britannia differunt. Tacit. Vit. Agric. xxxiv.

‖ The precise time in which Julius Solinus wrote is not well ascertained.

who

who were in such a state of rudeness that they made no distinction between right and wrong §.

In vain has it been said that the writers, whose authority we have cited, were ill-informed concerning the manners of the Irish, and that barbarity in which their country was anciently involved. The Britons, who, according to Strabo ||, resorted to Rome, could not have been ignorant of the state of Ireland. From those Britons, we may conclude that both Strabo and Mela derived their informations concerning the Hibernians; and in the days of Tacitus the ports of Ireland were so well known, that the celebrated writer could not possibly have been ignorant of the real character of its inhabitants *. Solinus had even a better opportunity than Strabo, Mela, and Tacitus, to become acquainted with the manners of the Irish. Britain had been a province of the empire two centuries, at least, before Solinus wrote. Some communication must have been maintained between the two Islands during that period, and of course

Objections answered.

§ Hibernia in humana ritu incolarum aspera, gens inhospita; fas atque nefas eodem animo ducunt. Solinus, xxxvi.

|| Ἀντίπαιδας γὰρ ἡμεῖς εἶδομεν ἐν Ῥώμῃ. Strabo, lib. iv.

* Melius aditus portusque per commercia et negotiatores cogniti. Tacit. Vit. Agric. xxiv.

the

the Romans could not have been strangers to the real manners of the inhabitants of Ireland.

The manners of the old Irish inconsistent with a knowledge of letters.

The genuine national character of the Irish, at a time when their Senachies say they had been in possession of letters for more than a thousand years, being thus ascertained, we find it absolutely inconsistent with learning, and that civility which is the invariable companion of literature. It was from this consideration that the most learned and unbiaſſed among the moderns rejected, as mere fable and romance, what is related concerning letters in Ireland, prior to the mission of Patrick, and the reign of Leogaire. The celebrated Camden looked upon the barbarity and ignorance of the ancient Irish as facts so well ascertained, that he produces them as proofs that the Romans, who polished those nations whom they subdued, never extended their empire to Ireland*. Sir James Ware, though very zealous for the honour of his country, gave no credit to the pretensions of the Irish to any knowledge of an alphabet, before they were introduced with Christi-

* Animum vix inducere possum ut hanc regionem, (Hiberniam) in Romanorum potestatem, ullo tempore, concessisse, credam. Faustum sane felixque Hiberniæ fuisset, si concessisset; certe barbariem exuisset; ubicunque enim Romani victores erant, victos humanitate excoluerunt. Nec sane alibi per Europam, humanitatis, literarum et elegantiae cultus, nisi ubi illi imperarunt. Camden, in Hibernia.

anity*;

anity*; and the learned Usher, by his silence concerning the affairs of Ireland beyond the fifth age, seems to join issue upon that head with Ware†.

Bolandus and the industrious Innes have entered into a serious refutation of the pretensions of Ireland to letters in the times of Paganism. Both these writers, as well as Ware, prove from Nennius‡, that the first alphabet was taught in that Island by St. Patrick. To strengthen the assertion of Nennius, Ware produced the authority of Tirochan, who, in the seventh age, wrote the life of the apostle of Ireland§. To these authorities Innes subjoins some critical observations of his own, which in themselves are enough to destroy the credit of the whole legend concerning the literature of the Pagan Irish.

* Per exiguam superesse notitiam rerum in Hibernia gestarum ante exortam ibi Evangelii auroram liquido constat. Notandum quidem descriptiones fere omnium, quæ de illis temporibus (ante Patricii in Hiberniam adventum,) extant, opera esse posteriorum seculorum. War. de Antiq. Hiberniæ.

† Ufferius in analibus sacris.

‡ Sanctus Patricius scripsit Abietoria 365 et eo amplius numero. Nenn. lix.

§ Unde constat opinor, abgetoria significare alphabetum, five elementa quæ scripsit et docuit S. Patricius. War. de Script. Hibern. lib. ii.

from their
using fo-
reign terms
in their let-
ters, &c.

The ingenious father very shrewdly observes, that the bare terms which the Romans used in their letters, arts, and sciences, sufficiently demonstrate, without having recourse to history, that they derived their polite learning from Greece *. In the same manner the proper terms by which the Irish, in their vulgar language, express every thing concerning letters and science, being Latin words hibernized †, leave no room to doubt that they were taught first to read and write by persons who spoke the Roman language. But as the Romans never entered Ireland, it is certain that the Irish did not receive those terms immediately from that nation. The first preachers of the gospel in Ireland, who had their education at Rome, were consequently those who introduced into that country the knowledge of letters, and the Roman terms by which their different uses were expressed.

* Grammatica, Rhetorica, Logica, Philosophia, cum multis aliis.

† Litera, *Lietar*; Liber, *Leabar*; Lego, *leagmi*; Scribo, *Scribmi*; Penna, *Pénn*; &c. &c. It is an unaccountable oversight in O'Flaherty, or in the Senachies, from whom he derived his information, to give the name of *Taible filea* to those wooden tables, upon which, it is pretended, the Pagan Irish wrote. *Taible*, if it is not derived from the English word *Table*, certainly owes its origin to the *tabula* of the Romans. Had the credulous antiquary used the Irish *Clár*, he might have avoided a circumstance which bears hard upon his own system.

In

In vain, continues Innes, has O'Flaherty ‡, and the ingenious father might have added many other Irish writers, affirmed that Ireland is, or was possessed of any books, whether of poetry or history, written before the introduction of Christianity into that Island *. This is manifestly begging the question, till these books are given to the public with literal translations and documents to prove their authority, their age, and where they have been preserved through so long a series of ages. The learned Ware, after all his enquiries, could not find one writer of Irish history or antiquities prior to the author of the Psalter-Cashel, whom he places in the tenth century; though from what Ware himself cites from the Psalter in another place †, it must have been written after the commencement of the eleventh age.

The arbitrary order in which the Irish of the middle ages placed their alphabet, and the fanciful appellations they gave them, prove only that the Hibernian Senachies formed a very early design to deceive the world on the article of their antiquities. But arguments arising from those two circumstances can only

‡ Ogygia xxx.

* Innes' Critical Essay, p. 44.

† Ware, de presulibus Hiberniæ.

deceive those who have not compared old Irish manuscripts with the records of any other nation in Europe, prior to the invention of printing. The perfect indentity observable in the forms of the letters in both sufficiently confutes this idle tale, unless we are to suppose that the Irish, and not the Romans, humanized and taught letters to all the European nations.

from the improbability
of their assertions.

It is unnecessary, with Bolandus and Innes, to pursue the abettors of the pretended literature of Ireland, before the mission of St. Patrick, through all the maze of a contest, in which positive assertions, on the side of the latter, supply the place of argument. To a brief detail of some other unanswerable objections advanced by the two learned writers, we shall annex some additional observations, to put an end for ever to the dispute. Keating, O'Flaherty, and Toland, upon the authority of the book of *Lecan*, a manuscript scarcely three hundred and fifty years old, affirm that one Phenius Farfa invented the Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and Irish alphabets, together with the Ogum of Ireland, little more than a century after the universal deluge. A legend which says that the Greek alphabet was invented many ages before Cecrops and Cadmus, and the Latin characters seventeen centuries before the Romans were a people, is too ridiculous to deserve any serious consideration. But this idle story is not more pregnant with

with absurdity than the mention that is made of Adam, Cain, Noah, the deluge, Moses, Pharaoh, and many other names and transactions in the old testament, in annals said to have been written many ages before Christianity introduced into Europe any knowledge of the Jewish history and antiquities.

The Irish being in some measure obliged to acknowledge that the Bethluifnion, notwithstanding the arbitrary transposition of the letters, and the puerile fancy of imposing upon them the names of trees, by the Bards and Senachies of the middle ages, was borrowed from the Latin, still continue to insist that their ancestors, in remote antiquity, made use of characters distinguished by the name of Ogum. Ogum is a word which has no affinity with any other in the Irish language, and seems therefore to have been a cant-name imposed upon a species of stenography or cypher, in which the old Irish, like many other nations, wrote their secrets. Sir James Ware, whose authority is often cited to prove the existence of the Ogum, shews plainly that it was a kind of short hand, varied according to the fancy of those that used it, and consequently that it did not merit the title of an alphabet *.

The Ogum
a species of
stenogra-
phy.

* Præter characteres vulgares utebantur veteres Hiberni variis occultis scribendi formulis, seu artificiis *Ogum* dictis, quibus secreta sua scribebant. Ware, de Antiq. Hibern. ii.

There

Contradictions between the ancient and modern Irish annalists.

There is no circumstance more conclusive against the learning of the Pagan Irish, than the contradictions between the ancient writers, and those of the modern annalists of Ireland. The antiquaries of that country, in proportion as the general history of the world became more and more known to them, reformed, new-modelled, and retrenched the extravagancies of the first rude draught of Hibernian antiquities formed by the Bards and Fileas. Had letters been cultivated in Ireland in so early a period as is pretended, systems of the history of that country would have been so anciently formed, and so well established by the sanction of their antiquity, that neither Keating or O'Flaherty durst, in the seventeenth age, give a compleat turn to the Irish antiquities. But that no such system was formed, is demonstrable from the silence concerning the times of Heathenism, in the most ancient annals of Ireland, of the existence of which we have any satisfactory proof*.

Decisive proof against the pretended literature of the old Irish.

To close with one decisive argument this controversy: It is to be observed that the settlement of the Milesians, under the name of Scots, in Ireland, about a thousand years before the Christian æra, is the capital point esta-

* These are the annals of Ulster, Tigernach, and Innisfail, all of which begin the history of Ireland about the middle of the fifth age, and end it in the eleventh century. Vid. Waræum de Scriptoribus Hiberniæ, passim.

blished

blished by the pretended literature of the Heathen Irish: Should this early settlement be once ascertained, it naturally ought to follow that the British Scots derived their blood from those of Ireland; if they did, they must have carried with them to Caledonia that learning, science, and civility, which had made so great a progress in their mother-country before they transmigrated from it. But nothing is more certain than that the British Scots were an illiterate people, and involved in barbarism, even after St. Patrick's mission to the Scots of Ireland. The abettors of the Irish antiquities are then reduced into this dilemma; either the Scots of North Britain did not derive their origin from Ireland, or else the Irish had not any knowledge of letters when the British Scots transmigrated from their country. If the first position is true, the whole credit of the Milesian story is at an end; if the latter, on the other hand, is the fact, no memory remains in Ireland of transactions prior to the mission of St. Patrick, and the reign of Leogaire.

From the general result of our enquiry upon this subject, we may conclude with Sir James Ware, that nothing certain is known concerning the affairs of Ireland before the middle of the fifth age*. We may

General
conclusions.

* Ad predecessores Leogarii quod attinet, eos certe consilio omisi quia pleraque quæ de iis traduntur, ut quod sentio dicam, vel fabulæ sunt, vel fabulis et anachronismis mire admixta. War. de Antiq. Hib. cap. iv.

also,

also, with the same learned writer §, take it for granted that the account of their Heathen ancestors, retailed by the annalists, antiquaries, and historians of Ireland, are the impostures of later ages *. It were to be wished that the writers of that country, who understood the ancient Galic, had not given room to suspect that they themselves were conscious of those impostures, by their concealing from the public those monuments of their ancient history from which they pretend to derive their information. But had they given them to the world, it is highly probable that external argument would be very unnecessary to prove that the literature of Ireland commenced with the mission of St. Patrick.

Irish writers reprehended.

It is a matter of some wonder that the Irish remain so long wedded to a ridiculous system of antiquities, which throws the reproach of credulity upon their nation. Every other polished people, who, in the times of ignorance, had set up high schemes of antiquity, have now extricated their history from the fables of their dark ages. Had there been a scarcity of men of abilities and learning in Ireland, some excuse might

§ Per exiguam superesse notitiam rerum in Hibernia gestarum, ante exortam ibi Evangelii auroram, liquido constat. War. de Antiq. Hib. præf. i. p. 1.

* Notandum quidem descriptiones fere omnium, quæ de illis temporibus, antiquioribus dico, extant, OPERA ESSE POSTERIORUM SEculorum. Waræus, ubi supra.

be

be framed for this blind attachment to the legends of the Bards. But as that country hath produced very able men, and qualified to form a solid foundation for a true history of their ancestors, they deserve to be severely animadverted upon, for not rescuing their antiquities, from that obscurity and fiction in which they have been involved, by some modern, prejudiced, and injudicious writers.

ANTI-

ANTIQUITIES

OF THE

BRITISH AND IRISH SCOTS.

Preliminary Observations.

General ob-
servation.

THE dark regions of Irish antiquity oppose more than their barrenness to inquiry. To the common gloom, which covers the origin of other nations, the Bards of Ireland have added clouds of their own. The desert of their ancient history, to use a metaphor, is haunted by goblins and strange forms, which distract the attention and offend the eye. To encounter the absurdities which the more ancient Irish possess for the annals of their remote ages, is not an arduous, but a disagreeable and tedious task. The field is ample, but it produces no laurels; the combat is not dangerous, but the victory will be attended by no fame. But the professed design of this work gives propriety to a minute inquiry into the pretensions of Ireland to high antiquities, and the public, it is hoped, will forgive the prolixity of the disquisition, on account of the necessity which has imposed so dry a subject upon the Author.

From the principles already established we may draw the following just conclusions: That the history of the Milesian colony, which, it is pretended, transmigrated from Spain into Ireland under the conduct of Heremon and Heber, is absolutely unworthy of any credit: That the long list of kings, who are said to have held the scepter of Ireland, for thirteen centuries before the Christian æra, had their existence only in the distempered fancies of the Bards of latter ages; and, in short, that every thing related in their domestic annals concerning the Irish, prior to the mission of St. Patrick, ought to be banished to the region of fiction and romance. Whatever dreamers in remote antiquities may be pleased to say, it is an undisputable fact, that the transactions of a nation, illiterate in itself, and too distant or obscure to be distinctly seen by foreign writers, must for ever lie buried in oblivion. The Irish, we have already seen, were so far from having the advantage of the Greeks and Romans in an earlier knowledge of letters*, that, on the contrary, they remained much longer in ignorance than the inhabitants of the regions of the West and North, whom the latter of those illustrious nations subdued and humanized.

The only means the old Irish had to preserve the memory of their actions were the rhimes of the Bards,

* Ken, Geneal. pref. p. 26.

History of
Ireland
commences
with St.
Patrick.

a race of men retained by all the illiterate nations descended from the great Celtic stock. Without insisting on the known uncertainty of history in rhyme, we may affirm that a dull narrative of facts in verse could never take hold of the human mind in a degree sufficient to transmit a knowledge of events, by oral tradition, through any considerable length of time. Granting then every possible indulgence to the traditional history of Ireland, we cannot admit that it extends much beyond the middle of the fifth age, if even to record the rhimes of the Heathen Bards had been the first use made of the alphabet introduced by St. Patrick. But as it is not, in any degree, probable that the first converts in Ireland would employ their time in collecting and recording historical poems, which were tinged, perhaps, with the ancient superstition, we may naturally place the commencement of the fabulous, as well as of the true history of that Island, posterior to the introduction of Christianity.

Spanish Extraction of the Irish examined and confuted.

Spanish extraction of
the Irish
before the
Christian
era.

The Irish annalists have, for many ages, adhered invariably to the pretended descent of their nation from the old Spaniards. The confidence with which they have always spoken on this subject, induced some learned men, who gave no credit to an early knowledge

ledge of letters in Ireland, to suppose that there was some foundation in fact for a story, concerning which, tradition had brought intimations from every quarter. But to those who have well considered the state of ancient Europe, it will appear just as improbable that the Spaniards could transport themselves into Ireland before the Christian æra, as it is impossible to believe that any memory of that event, had it actually happened, could have been preserved by tradition to the introduction of letters by St. Patrick.

It does not appear that much of the knowledge of <sup>highly im-
probable.</sup> the arts of civil life was extended to the inhabitants of the mountains of Asturia and Gallicia, from the settlement established by the Phœnicians in the Island of Gades. So far were the old Spaniards, who possessed the shore of the Atlantic, from improving themselves in navigation by their vicinity to the ocean, that Strabo affirms *, that from their situation they were cut off from all commerce with the rest of mankind. Of all the inhabitants of the Celtiberian division of Spain, Diodorus Siculus remarks †, that the Vaccæi were the

* Παρωκεανῆτις προειληφύια καὶ ἀνεπίπλεκτρον τοῖς ἄλλοις ὥς θ' ὑπερβαλλεῖ τῇ μοχθηρίᾳ τῆς οἰκησίως. Strabo, lib. iii.

† Χαριέστατον δὲ τῶν πλησιοχώρων ἐθνῶν αὐτοῖς ἐστὶ το τῶν Ὀυκκαίων ὀνομαζομένων σύστημα. "Ουτοὶ γὰρ καθ' ἑκάστον ἔτος διακίρουμένοι τὴν χώραν, γεωργοῦσι. Diod. Sic. lib. v.

most.

most humanized, for they had some knowledge in agriculture. But if a small skill in one of the earliest and rudest arts entitled the Vaccæi to the character of a civilized people, when compared to the neighbouring tribes, we may, with justice, conclude that those tribes had not made a progress in navigation sufficient to make them venture into the ocean, and transport a colony into Ireland.

Dropt as indefensible.

The scheme of deducing the Irish Scots from the Spaniards prior to the Christian æra, was dropt as indefensible by those of the most learning and judgment, who examined the subject. After Innes had destroyed the credit of the Milesian tale, he found it necessary to investigate the origin of the Scots in some other way. He proposed to himself as a question, from whence, and at what period, came the Scots into Ireland? "They came," says the ingenious father, "either from Scandia or Cantabria, about the time of the incarnation, or rather a little time after it*".

Vague conclusions of English antiquaries.

The antiquaries of England either did not examine with attention the origin of the Scots, or, averse to enter into a contest with the Irish about a matter in which their own nation was not materially concerned, spoke very undecisively on this subject. Stillingfleet

* Innes' Critical Essay.

thought

thought that the Scots were Scythians from Scandinavia; but the time of their transmigration he does not attempt to assign *. Camden, contrary to his usual precision, is full of uncertainty on this head. They were, says the celebrated writer, Scythians from Spain, Scandia, or Germany. At one time he makes them the posterity of those Goths whom Constantine expelled from Spain; at another time, they are a motley aggregate of many nations; and last of all they are descendants of those Britons who first possessed themselves of Ireland †.

It is idle, on this subject, to listen to the tales of the Bards, annalists, and antiquaries of Ireland; they have been heard out and confuted. Innes is the only writer who has reduced the origin of the Scots into a regular system; and he endeavours to defend it. Should the ingenious father's scheme be destroyed, the Caledonian extraction of the Irish must of course rise upon its ruins. The Scots, says Innes, were foreigners who invaded or conquered Ireland in the first age of Christianity. Two kinds of proofs, observes the ingenious father, are necessary to establish this proposition; the testimony of cotemporary writers, and the effects arising from such an invasion and conquest.

* Stillingfleet, Orig. Britan.

† Camden, Britan. in Scotis.

Proofs from
the ancients
against it.

Diodorus
Siculus,

Strabo,

Pomponius
Mela,

In vain did Innes search for the testimony of writers to support the credit of this Hibernian revolution*.

Diodorus Siculus, who mentions the Irish a little time before the Christian æra, says expressly that they were Britons, who had derived their blood from the Gauls†; and Strabo, in the unfavourable account he gives of his cotemporaries of Ireland, gives no hint of the settlement of the Spaniards in that Island§.

The acrimony of Mela's‡ observations on the national character of the Irish is a strong argument against the Cantabric descent of that nation. Mela himself was a Spaniard, he had some interest in the Gallæci, and could not have been ignorant of the Cantabric war. Had he learned, and had any such event happened it must have come to his knowledge, that, after all the efforts of Augustus in person, or by his lieutenants, Antistius, Furnius, Carisius, and Agrippa, the Cantabri collected a body of men, committed themselves to the ocean, and seized upon Ireland, from a natural partiality for his countrymen he would have treated the Irish with more decency and respect.

* Innes' Critical Essay, p. 509.

† Ferocissimi *Gallorum* sunt qui sub septemtrionibus habitant; dicunt ex iis nonnullos Anthropophagos esse, sicut *Britannos* qui *Irin* tenent. Diod. Sic. lib. v.

§ Strabo, lib. iii.

‡ Pomponius Mela, lib. iii.

Cornelius

Cornelius Tacitus wrote the life of Agricola before Tacitus, the conclusion of the first age. Agricola had formed a plan to reduce Ireland under the Roman yoke. The low idea that great commander entertained of the number and valor of the Irish is an unanswerable proof that the Cantabric descent of that nation is a mere fiction. Had any considerable body of those brave Spaniards, who fought against Augustus and his lieutenants, transmigrated into Ireland, Agricola could not suppose that a single legion was sufficient to subjugate and maintain the conquest of that Island. It is idle, in short, to expect from Tacitus any support to Innes' Spanish system. The celebrated writer, from the best information, * affirms, that the British and Hibernians were of much the same genius and manners, and from that circumstance we may infer that the two nations derived their origin from one common source.

From the only favourable epithet bestowed by Solinus, Solinus, linus † on the Irish of the second or third age, Innes

* Sæpe ex eo (*Agricolâ vel ipso Hiberno; nonnulli enim existimant C. Tacitum in Caledonia militasse*) audiui, legione una et modicis auxiliis debellari obtinerique Hiberniam posse. Tacit. Vit. Agric. cap. 24. Agricola expulsum seditione domestica, unum ex regulis gentis (*Hibernicæ*) exceperat, ac specie amicitiae in occasionem retinebat. Tacit. Vit. Agric. cap. 24.

† Hibernia inhumana ritu incolarum aspera. Gens inhospita et bellicosa: fas et nefas eodem animo ducunt. Solin. cap. 36.

M

concludes

concludes that the Scots, a valiant body of foreigners, were settled among them before the time of that writer. It is difficult to comprehend why a mixture of foreign blood should be necessary to make the Irish a warlike people. If the situation of their country secured them from invasion, the civil dissensions arising from their being divided into a number of petty septs would have undoubtedly kindled and preserved a martial spirit among them. But if a colony from abroad was requisite to entitle the inhabitants of Ireland to the character of a brave race of men, it is more natural to suppose that some of the Britons of the South, or of the Caledonians of the North, settled among them, than emigrants from Cantabria. Tacitus says, and indeed it is common sense, that many Britons fled into Ireland from the tyranny of the Romans.

Ptolemy,

Ptolemy, who wrote under the Antonines, has not once mentioned the Scots, though he is very minute with regard to inferior tribes settled in Ireland. The geographer found in the lesser Britain the Brigantes, Vellabori, Cauci, and Menappii, but the redoubtable Scots of Cantabria totally escaped his notice. Camden, willing to humour the Irish in their pretensions to a Spanish extract, has observed that the Lucensii and Concani were neighbours in Spain, as the Luceni and Gongani were in Hibernia. If this is an argument,
others

others of the same kind and of equal force may be produced to oppose it. The Cauci and Menapii were neighbours in Germany, and so were tribes of the same name, according to Ptolemy, in Ireland. Shall we then bring some Irish tribes from Cantabria, others from Germany, transport the Brigantes from South Britain, and totally exclude all emigrants from Caledonia, which is within a few leagues of the Irish shore? Camden's observation might have been extended further; the Iberians and Albanians were contiguous to one another in Asia; the Hibernians and Albanians possessed the British Isles, divided from one another by a very narrow channel; and ought we from that circumstance to infer, that the Caledonians and Irish came from the shores of the Caspian?

In the days of Orosius the Irish were distinguished Orosius, by the name of Scottish clans. Orosius does not say from whence these Scottish tribes transmigrated into Ireland. Though a Spaniard himself, he has not mentioned, in treating of the Cantabric war, a circumstance that would have done honour to his country; that a great body of the Cantabri, rather than submit to Augustus, or to skulk in mountains and deserts, or throw in despair their lives away like many of their countrymen, committed themselves to the ocean, and acquired in Ireland better settlements than those for

which they contended, with so much unavailing bravery against the Romans.

Florus.

Florus is another writer of Spanish extraction. He was evidently partial to the Cantabri, but he does not even furnish an obscure hint that either of the two warlike nations who were engaged in the last Spanish war against the Romans, had, after their unsuccessful efforts to defend their liberty, found new settlements in the neighbouring ocean. The greatest part of the Cantabri, according to Florus, after being hard pressed both by sea and land, driven out of their fastnesses, hunted down like wild beasts, and, at last, inclosed within lines of circumvallation, rescued themselves from slavery by a voluntary death. A series of similar misfortunes pursued the Asturians; after having inclosed themselves within walls, they were taken by the armies of Rome, the whole nation were transplanted from their native mountains to the plain country, and an end for ever put to Spanish insurrections.

The Irish
not a Spanish colony
proved
from their
language.

In the whole history of the Cantabrig war it is impossible to find a Spanish nation, hostile to the Romans, that were able to equip transports for a colony, escape the vigilance of the Roman navy, and numerous enough to conquer or people Ireland. In vain has Innes availed himself of a pretended analogy between the
Biscayan

Biscayan dialect and the language of Ireland, to support his scheme of the Spanish extract of the Scots. That the most ancient inhabitants of Galicia were mixed with Celtes is a point sufficiently established by the authority of many of the ancients*; and therefore that they originally spoke in part the same language with the Gaël who first transmigrated into Britain, may, from the circumstance of the descent common to both nations, be inferred. The sterility of the mountains of Galicia would never invite new settlers whom the bravery of the old inhabitants could not repel. They consequently remained an unmixed people, and the simplicity of their manners preserved their language from corruption. A similar situation had a similar effect on the Scots of the British Isles. The north of Scotland received no colonies in any period that can be assigned; and the Irish remained, in a great measure, unmixed until the English conquest of their country.

* Ephorus ingenti magnitudine facit Celticam; quod illi (scilicet Celtæ) pleraque ejus Terræ, quam nunc Iberiam vocamus, loca usque ad Gades tenuerint. Strabo, lib. iv. Galli occidua usque ad Gades incolunt secundum Eratosthenem. Strabo, lib. ii. Hi (Celtiberi) duo enim populi Iberes et Celtæ. Diod. Sic. lib. v. Martial, speaking to Lucius, of Spain their common country, says, Nos Celtis genitos. Martial Epig. Gallorum Celtæ miscentes nomen Iberis. Lucan. lib. vi. Venere Celtæ sociati nomen Iberis. Silius Ital. lib. iii. Vid. Appian. Hisp.

But

But notwithstanding circumstances common to the Cantabri and the Scots of both our Isles, the language of the latter has less affinity with the modern Biscayan, than the English tongue has with that of the Moguls of the eastern Tartary*.

* That the language of the mountaineers of Galicia, and that part of Spain which stretches along the Bay of Biscay, bears a near analogy to the language of the old Irish, has been an axiom universally admitted. This has been the last resort, the unanswerable argument, to which all the Irish antiquaries have referred the certainty of the Spanish extraction of their nation. Unfortunately for the old Hibernian system, a dictionary of the Biscayan language is, at this moment, in the possession of the Author of the Introduction, and he publicly declares that there is less affinity between the Biscayan and Irish languages, than between the latter and the tongue of the most distant nations in the eastern Asia. The curious may satisfy themselves upon this head by looking into *Diccionario Trilingue del Castellano BASCUENCE y' Latin*, written by the *Padre Manuel de Larramendi*, and printed in 1745 at St. Sebastians. This discovery seems to confirm the opinion of Varro, who, as he is cited by Pliny, insinuates that the Iberians of Spain were of African origin. The language of the modern Biscayans, it is certain, bears no affinity to the other European tongues, which are radically descended from the ancient Celtic. The name of Iberians given to them in contradistinction to the Celtæ is a proof of their being a different people. Lucan seems to insinuate this fact in a line already quoted; Gallorum Celtæ *miscentes* nomen Iberis; and the Venere Celtæ *sociati* nomen Iberis of Silius Italicus, together with the express testimony of Diodorus Siculus and Appian, confirms the opinion.

Scandi-

Scandinavian Extraction of the Irish confuted.

If Innes had little reason to deduce the Scots from Spain, he had still less to derive them from any of the nations of Scandinavia. Neither he or Stillingfleet were able, with all their erudition, to support a Scandinavian migration into Ireland, in the first age, by the authority of any cotemporary writer. One argument will be perhaps sufficient to destroy the credit of this part of the ingenious father's scheme. The language of the Scandinavians, being a branch of the Sarmatic, is *radically different* from the Hibernian and British Galic. It must be acknowledged that the ancients sometimes distinguished the Germans, as well as those nations who inhabited beyond the Baltic, by the name of Scythians. But it is extremely puerile to infer, from the remote analogy between the name of Scythians and Scots, that the latter nation derived their blood either from the Germans or old Scandinavians. The Danes, for a similar reason, might deduce themselves from the Danaï of Greece; and the Caledonians of North Britain trace themselves to those of the same name in Ætolia.

Pretended
Scandina-
vian descent
of the Irish
confuted.

Innes

Innes' vi-
sionary ar-
gument

Innes endeavours to support this branch of his system with other arguments. "The Romans, says the ingenious writer, after the conquest of Gaul found means to confine the Germans within their own territories. Being overstocked with numbers at home, they were obliged to put to sea, and try their fortune beyond the pale of the empire. The Germans, touching on the opposite shore of North Britain, were probably repulsed by the bravery of the Caledonians, upon which they steered their course to Ireland and made a conquest of that country."

from the
population
of Ger-
many

The legions of Rome it is certain frustrated, for some time, the attempts which the Germans made to extend themselves towards the South. In the reign of Augustus they crossed the Rhine without success, and in that of Vespasian they aided, to no purpose, the rebellion of Claudius Civilis. When Domitian held the reins of government at Rome the Germans attempted the conquest of Gaul, and they gave much trouble to many of his successors in the imperial dignity. The Romans, says Cornelius Tacitus *, rather triumphed over, than subdued, the Germans; the victories which the imperial armies gained in their country being at-

* Proximis temporibus triumphati magis quam victi. Tacit. de Mor. Germ. cap. 37.

tended with more glory than any solid advantage. To prevent the incursions of enemies so formidable, the Romans had recourse to political expedients to weaken their power at home. Both Augustus and Tiberius concluded treaties with the Suevi and Sicambri, and transplanted them into the fertile provinces of Gaul.

It does not appear that Germany was overstocked with confuted. numbers, after the Roman legions had excluded their migrating armies from Gaul. In the attempts of the Germans upon that country, in the reign of Augustus, they lost a great number of their bravest soldiers; and the expeditions of Drusus depopulated whole districts of their country. Tiberius was not less successful in Germany than his brother Drusus, nor his many victories less destructive to the inhabitants of that country*. After his accession to the imperial dignity, his nephew Germanicus, with eight legions supported by auxiliaries, ravaged all that tract of country, which lies between the Rhine and the Elbe, and made a general massacre of the whole nation of the Marfi. Germany, during that fatal period, was involved in civil wars. The ill-timed animosities between Arminius and Segestes, the ravages of Maroboduus, and the invasion of the Romans, made it a scene of unparalleled miseries. It is therefore certain that Germany, in the first century, was more depopulated, than it was in any former or after period, if

* Velleius Paterculus, lib. iv.

we except the time in which the Franks, Allemans, and Lombards, evacuated their territories to settle themselves in more fertile countries *.

The Irish
descended
of the Bri-
tish Gaël.

It appears, upon the whole, that no colonies came to Ireland either from Spain or the North of Europe, between the commencement of the Christian æra, and the close of the third century, when the Scots are mentioned by Porphyrius for the first time. That the Scots came from either of those countries by a long voyage to Ireland, prior to the first century, is sufficiently contradicted by the known barbarism of the old Hibernians, as well as of all other nations whom an intercourse with the Romans had not humanized. We must have recourse, in the last resort, to the Caledonian Britons for the genuine origin of the Irish. Their name of Gaël, their

* It must be confessed that several tribes in the North-East angle of Scotland have preserved in their traditions, and the genealogical histories of their families, pretensions to a German origin. The Clancattin, or the tribe of *Catti*, consisting of a great variety of branches, the most numerous of which are the Macphersons, Mackintoshes, and Sutherlands, affirm, with one consent, that the famous Catti of ancient Germany were their ancestors. Though this opinion very probably took its rise from an identity of names, it is far from being unlikely that some Celto-Germanic tribes transmigrated, at different times, into that part of Britain which was not subject to the Romans; but it is morally impossible that a migration, sufficient to people Caledonia and Ireland, could have happened, without falling within the knowledge of the writers of Rome, who certainly extended their enquiries to the transactions of the wild nations on the frontiers of the empire.

language,

language, the conformity of their manners and customs with those of the old Britons, all concur in proving, beyond any possibility of reply, that the Irish are the posterity of the Gauls or Gaël, who, after having traversed the Island of Great Britain, passed over, in a very early period, into Ireland from the promontories of Galloway and Cantire.

IRISH EXTRACTION OF THE SCOTS EXAMINED.

General Reflections.

General ob-
servation.

NATIONS find it difficult to divest themselves of a partiality for systems of antiquity, which, to the sanction of ages, have added the authority of learned men. The Scots of both the British Isles were formerly peculiarly attached to the absurd tales, with which their bards had covered their origin. Many still retain the unmanly credulity, which has been the reproach of their ancestors, and think it a kind of sacrilege to disperse the gloom, which involves the commencements of their history. The Author of the Introduction writes not for these; he has taken up arms against fiction and romance, and he will not lay them down till the whole are subdued. In destroying the fantastic fables, which deform the obscurity of our ancient history, he may perhaps bury whole ages in darkness; but oblivion itself is better than inauthentic fame. The credit of the Milesian tale is already destroyed, and it is perhaps superfluous to refute the pretended Hibernian extraction of the Scots. Both stories depend
upon

upon the same authority, and they must both fall by the same argument. But to close for ever a contest, which, though not material in itself, has employed the pens of many learned men, and attracted the attention of nations, we must discuss the point at more length than its importance deserves.

It has already appeared that nothing certain is known concerning the affairs of Ireland prior to the mission of St. Patrick *. The history of Caledonia, before the Roman eagles were displayed beyond the friths, must for ever remain in impenetrable darkness. Both countries were peopled many ages before the reign of Domitian, but how they were governed, or by what petty chieftains or kings, a Scottish or Irish Berosus can only tell. Had a hundred Hibernian colonies, with a royal Milesian at the head of each, transmigrated into North Britain before the Roman arms penetrated into Caledonia, they must, without a revelation from heaven, remain involved in eternal oblivion. It is as ridiculous to

Nothing
known of
the Irish
before St.
Patrick.

* Perexiguam supereffe notitiam rerum in Hibernia gestarum, ante exortam ibi Evangelii Auroram, liquido constat. War. de Antiq. Hib. Ad predecessores Leogarii (*ille enim solium Hibernicum sub adventum Patri- cii tenuit*) quod attinet, eos certe consilio omisi, quia pleraque quæ de iis traduntur, ut quod sentio dicam, vel fabulæ sunt, vel fabulis et ana- chronismis mire admixta. War. de Antiq. c. iv.

assert, as it would be downright anility to believe, that Caledonia received an Irish colony before Tacitus wrote the life of Agricola. To prove that no Irish colony transmigrated into Britain in or after the reign of Domitian, it is proper to review what the Romans have communicated concerning the state of Caledonia from that period to the appearance of the Scots on the frontiers of the province.

The Scots not of Irish Extract.

No Irish
migration
happened in
the first cen-
tury:

Julius Agricola employed his fourth campaign in securing the acquisitions which he had made to the South of the Forth and Clyde; and could the bravery of his troops, and the glory of the Roman name, permit it, that able commander, says Tacitus, might find in those friths a proper boundary for his conquests in Britain *. Agricola, in the fifth year of his expeditions, shipping his army in the Clyde, attacked nations till then unknown, in that part of Caledonia which lies over against Ireland. After several successful engagements he stationed some of his troops there to be in readiness for an Irish expedition †.

* Ac si virtus exercituum et Romani nominis gloria pateretur, inventus in ipsa Britannia terminus. Tacit. Vit. Agric. xxiii.

† Eamque partem Britanniae quæ Hiberniam aspicit, copiis intravit, in spem magis quam ob formidinem. Tacit. Vit. Agric. xxiv.

The

The counties of Dumbarton and Argyle were the theatre of war in Agricola's fifth campaign. The inhabitants were so numerous, that, for a whole summer, they gave ample employment to the Roman army; and that, at a time, when, by the testimony of Agricola himself †, a single legion was sufficient not only to subdue, but also to secure the conquest of Ireland.

First argument.

In vain will it be objected that the Roman commander might have been mistaken in his calculation of the internal strength of Ireland. He had in his camp an Irish prince who was no stranger to the state of his own country. Should it be supposed that this exile, from a desire of inducing Agricola to undertake an expedition, which might re-establish himself in his dominions, gave a false account of Ireland, the Roman was too prudent to rely altogether on the intelligence of the Hibernian fugitive. The ports of Ireland were, in those times, better known than those of Britain; and Agricola must have consulted those who traded into that country concerning the force of an Island which he intended to invade*.

Second argument.

† Sæpe ex eo audivi, legione una et modicis auxiliis debellari, obtinerique Hiberniam posse. Tacit. Vit. Agric. xxiv.

* Tacit. Vit. Agric. xxiv.

Third argument.

We may therefore conclude that Agricola formed, upon good intelligence, a just idea of the state of Ireland, and consequently that it was very thinly peopled, or that the military character of its inhabitants, on account of their extreme barbarism, was very low. In either of these situations it is not in any degree probable, that the Irish, in the days of Domitian, would have made any attempts to settle in Caledonia; or that those whom one legion was sufficient to subdue at home, could make conquests abroad, among a people who employed the whole force of the Roman army.

Fourth argument.

It is difficult to ascertain with exactness the number of the troops of Agricola in his Caledonian expedition. Josephus says that there were four legions stationed in Britain in the days of Domitian. We learn from Tacitus, that Agricola, at one period of the Caledonian war, divided his army into three bodies. The enemy attacked one of those divisions consisting of the ninth legion, which, according to the established maxim of the Romans, must have been supported by a proportionable number of auxiliaries. Upon the whole we may conclude, that the two counties of Argyle and Dumbarton opposed, for a campaign, thrice the number of troops, that, according to Agricola's opinion, was sufficient to conquer the whole kingdom of Ireland.

Had

Had there been in the time of Agricola an Hibernian colony settled in the western Caledonia, who had resolution and numbers sufficient to oppose that great man, it is impossible that their mother country could have been represented by him in so despicable a light. Neither is it probable that Tacitus, in his short account of the Irish nation, where he observes that their genius and manners did not differ materially from the Britons *, would have omitted to say that the western Caledonians derived their blood from Ireland, had that actually been the case. The celebrated writer, on the contrary, gave it as his opinion, that the Caledonians, in the most extensive sense of that name, and consequently the inhabitants of Argyle and Dumbarton, were of German extract ‡.

Fifth argument.

The Irish, upon the authority of those annals whose credit has been already destroyed, affirm that their ancestors, in the days of Agricola, as well as in subsequent periods, were the life and strength of the Caledonian armies †. It will, perhaps, be thought unnecessary to confute these unauthorized assertions, after what has been already said concerning the faith due to Irish his-

Irish fables on the subject

* *Ingenia cultusque hominum haud multum a Britannia differunt.* Tacit. Vit. Agric. xxiv.

‡ *Caledoniam habitantium rutilæ comæ, magni artus, Germanicam originem asseverant.* Tacit. Vit. Agric. xi.

† O'Flaherty in Ogygia.

tory before the time of St. Patrick. But to give every advantage to the zealous abettors of the old system, we shall examine this tale, without insisting on the impossibility that even tradition could extend to Ireland in the first century.

improbable. Crimothan the first, it would appear, held the reins of government in Ireland when Agricola carried the Romans arms into Caledonia. This monarch transported an army into North Britain, aided the Caledonians against the Romans, and after the departure of Agricola returned to Ireland laden with spoils and foreign trophies. Tacitus was extremely unjust to the happy valour of Crimothan against the Romans. The illustrious Crimothan, the supreme king of Ireland, was, it seems, inferior in command, in birth and valour, to the chieftain who was at the head of the Caledonian confederacy. Tacitus expressly affirms, that Galgacus was superior, in those respects, to all the leaders of that army which fought Agricola near the Grampian mountains†.

Impossible. Is it not somewhat strange, that Galgacus has totally neglected to mention his ally Crimothan, and his Hibernian forces, in that excellent speech with which he

† Inter plures duces genere et virtute præstans. Tacit. Vit. Agric. xxix.

animated the Caledonian army*? And why did not Tacitus place the provocation given by Crimothan among those reasons which Agricola assigned for his intended expedition into Ireland? The celebrated writer, the truth is, knew nothing of Crimothan or his troops; and therefore we may conclude, that the redoubtable monarch, if he ever existed, never crossed the Irish channel. It is upon the whole demonstrable, that no part of Caledonia was possessed by an Hibernian colony in the days of Agricola; and that the story of the pretended auxiliaries from Ireland is absolute fiction.

The losses sustained by the Caledonians during the expedition of Agricola were, perhaps, much exaggerated by Tacitus. But had they suffered even more than the historian affirms, they had time to recover their former strength during the long tranquillity which succeeded the departure of Agricola, and continued to the reign of Hadrian. The incursions of the Caledonians rendered it necessary for that emperor to come in person into Britain; but that the Barbarians suffered very little loss by his arms we may naturally infer, from his relinquishing to them all that tract of country which extends from the Tyne and Solway to the Scottish friths †.

The Caledonians suffered little from Agricola.

* Tacit. Vit. Agric. xxx.

† Murum per octingenta millia passuum primus duxit, qui Barbaros Romanosque divideret. Spartian. in Hadriano, xi.

Formidable
in the reign
of Pius.

Lollius Urbicus, in the reign of Antoninus Pius, defeated the Caledonians; and, driving them beyond the Forth and Clyde, excluded them by an earthen wall from the Roman Britain *. Though repelled by Urbicus, and afterwards by Ulpus Marcellus, in the time of Commodus, they were far from being reduced so low as to yield a part of their territories to the Romans, much less to a band of Hibernian adventurers. Before they were chastised by Marcellus, they had committed † dreadful devastations in the province, and cut off a Roman general with the greatest part of his army. When Severus assumed the purple, they harassed the northern provincials with such cruelty, and so little intermission, that Virius Lupus was driven to the shameful necessity of purchasing a peace from them with money ‡.

Expedition
of Severus

Some years after this ignominious treaty was patched up, the Roman lieutenant in Britain acquainted Severus that the northern Barbarians were every where in motion; that they overran, plundered, and laid waste

* Britannos per Lollium Urbicum Legatum vicit, alio muro cespitio submotis Barbaris ducto. Capitolin. in Antonin. v.

† Καὶ πολλὰ κακουργουτῶν, σφαίητόν τε τινα μετὰ τῶν σφαίητόν οὐς εἶχε καλῶς καφάλλον, φεβηθεῖς ὁ Κομοδος Μαρκελλον Ὀυλπίου ἐπ' αὐτοῦ ἐπεμψε. Dion. Cass. lib. lxxii.

‡ Ὁ Λεωπος μεγάλων, χρημάσων τὴν εἰρήνην παρὰ τῶν Μαιαίων εκπριάσθαι. Dion. Cass. lib. lxxv.

the province, and that therefore a powerful reinforcement, or the presence of the emperor himself, was indispensibly necessary *. Severus, desirous of adding to the laurels he had acquired in the East and North, embraced, with pleasure, an opportunity so favourable to his ambition. Though oppressed with the gout and the weight of years, he undertook immediately an expedition into Britain; and, arriving with a great army, made preparations for a vigorous and decisive campaign. The Barbarians were alarmed, sent an embassy to excuse their conduct, and to offer overtures of peace. Severus for some time amused the ambassadors, and when every thing was prepared, marched northward, with a fixed resolution to exterminate the whole nation of the Caledonians.

But the flattering hopes of Severus vanished into air, attended with no success. after the most vigorous exertions of courage, conduct, and force; after sustaining incredible fatigues with amazing patience, and the loss of fifty thousand men, he was at last reduced to the old and inglorious expedient of building a wall to exclude from the province those Barbarians whom he could neither extirpate or

* Επισέλλει ὁ τῆς Βρεττανίας ἡγούμενος στασιαζέινταυς ἐκεῖ Βαρβαροὺς Φαρκων, καὶ κατὰ τρέχοντας τὴν χώραν, λείαν τε ἀπαγαγεῖν, καὶ πορθεῖν τὰ πλεῖστα δεῖσθαι τάννυ χειρὸς πλείονος, πρὸς Βοήθειαν τοῦ τοποῦ ἢ Βασιλικῆς ἐπιδημίας. Herodian. lib. iii.

subdue †. We may therefore infer, from this circumstance, that the Caledonians, after all the toil and military efforts of Severus, so far from being annihilated, or even much weakened or humbled, continued a very formidable enemy.

Milesian
fictions.

Some Irish annalists affirm, that the Picts, from the commencement of their history, through a long series of ages, were tributary to the Milesian Scots of Ireland. It is observable, that the pretended records from which the incredible tale is extracted, make no mention of the Caledonian name, which circumstance is very unfavourable to the credit of the annals of Ireland. The inhabitants of North Britain ceased to be distinguished by the name of Caledonians about the close of the fourth age; so that the Milesian system must have been fabricated in a period so modern as to place the fourth century beyond the reach of tradition. But, by whatever name the northern Britons were distinguished, it is reasonable to suppose that the monarch of Ireland would have sent auxiliaries to his distressed vassals when Severus threatened the whole nation with extirpation. Herodian and Dion Cassius were then very unjust to his Hibernian majesty, for

† Ἐς φίλιαν επανήλθεν, ἐς ὁμολογίαν τοὺς Βρεττανούς ἐπὶ τῷ χώρῳ οὐκ ὀλίγης ἐκστῆσαι, ἀναγκάσας εἰσεῖν. Dion. Cass. lib. lxxvi.

neither

neither he or his forces are once mentioned in the minute account given by those historians of the Caledonian war. The Roman writers with one consent seem to have entered into a conspiracy against the military fame of the royal line of Heremon. In vain did Crimothan discomfit legions in Britain; in vain did the redoubtable Nial carry his victorious arms to the banks of the Loire; it was to no purpose that Dathy*, whom heaven alone could subdue, penetrated to the foot of the Alps; foreign writers, with a scandalous partiality, not only concealed the exploits, but even the very names of those heroes.

In the long period which intervened between the accession of the sons of Severus to the imperial dignity, and the middle of the fourth age, the Caledonians were not once attacked within their own territories by the Roman armies. The exploits of Carausius are mere fiction, and the feats of Constantine and his father Chlorus in Caledonia existed only in the rants of ecclesiastical panegyrists. The frequent contests for the purple, between men sometimes called emperors

State of
Caledonia
from Seve-
rus to the
appearance
of the Scots.

* Dathy was an Irish prince, who, according to the Hibernian senachies, penetrated with an army to the Alps, and was killed by a flash of lightning at the foot of those mountains. Dathy, though placed beyond christianity in Ireland, derives his name from David the son of Jesse, which of itself proves that the exploits of Dathy were of the *figmenta posteriorum seculorum* of Ware.

and

and sometimes tyrants and usurpers, in proportion as they were near or far distant from the capital; the public distractions which arose naturally from these disputes, the growing imbecillity of the empire, and the invasions of the Barbarians of the northern Europe, diverted the attention of the Romans from Caledonia. In a period so long, and of such tranquillity, the inhabitants of North Britain, instead of declining, must have greatly multiplied their numbers. In the tenth consulship of Constantius, the son of Constantine, we meet with the Scots, a formidable nation in Britain. Ammianus Marcellinus, who found them first in the island, does not furnish one obscure hint that they derived their blood from a foreign country. The historian, on the contrary, gives to them and the Picts the character of wild nations, plainly in opposition to those Britons whom the Romans had subdued and humanized *.

* Consulatu vero Constantii decies, terque Juliani, in Britanniis cum *Scotorum* Pictorumque gentium ferarum excursus, &c. Ammianus Marcellinus, lib. xx.

Proved from various Arguments.

Bede is the first writer who positively affirms that the Scots of Britain derived their origin from those of Ireland. Whether they originally obtained from the Picts the principality of Iar-gaël or Argyle by force or treaty, was a point which all his historical and traditional knowledge did not enable the venerable Anglo-Saxon to determine. The incapacity of Bede, who lived so near the pretended transmigration of the Irish, to solve this difficulty, is a kind of demonstration that the whole story is a fiction, imposed upon that credulous, though pious writer.

If the Picts were so feeble that a band of Irish adventurers could tear from them one third of their dominions, how came they so frequently to provoke the Roman legions, and harass the provincials from the time of Chlorus to the total dereliction of Britain by Honorius? To invade the territories of a warlike and disciplined people when they suffered a great part of their own to be wrested from them by a despicable enemy, is a folly too absurd to gain any credit. But perhaps the Picts gave the district of Argyle to their allies of Ireland, in consideration of services against the Romans. These services were extremely

tremely unnecessary ; for the Romans, till provoked by incursions, were very inoffensive towards the Barbarians beyond the walls. Nations, in short, have been known to receive foreigners into the bosom of their country to repel invasions, but it is ridiculous to think that any people would have recourse to so dangerous an expedient for the pleasure of harassing neighbours who did not in any degree offend them.

Third argument.

It is difficult for the unprejudiced part of mankind to believe, that a colony, sufficient to occupy the western Highlands and Isles, could have waisted themselves, their wives, and children, at once, from Ireland into the northern Britain, in *Curraghs* or miserable skiffs, whose hulls of wicker were wrapped up in a cow's hide. In these wretched vessels, it is true, an irregular communication was kept up between both the Islands ; but the navigation was dangerous, and performed only in the fairest days of summer *. The fertility of the soil of Iar-ghaël could never be an inducement to an Irish migration into that division of Caledonia. If poverty, or their being overstocked with numbers,

* Mare quod Britanniam et Hiberniam interluit undosum et inquietum, toto in anno non nisi æstivis pauculis diebus est navigabile. Navigant autem viminiis alveis quos circumdant ambitione tergorum bubulinorum. Solin. xxxv.

compelled

compelled the inhabitants of the pretended Dalrietta, or the *Route* in the county of Antrim, to go in quest of foreign settlements, they ought in common prudence to have tried their fortune in the southern division of their own country, and not in the sterile mountains of the western Caledonia.

- The Irish must have been wonderfully improved in military knowledge from the days of Agricola, if it was more difficult in the fourth century to extort part of their dominions from them, than from the Caledonians, who had better opportunities to be enured to arms. Turgesius and his Norwegians did not find, in an after age, that the Irish were so obstinately tenacious of their fertile lands, as the posterity of the Picts were of their own barren country, when repeatedly attacked by all the efforts of Scandinavia.

Should it be supposed that a band of adventurers were expelled from Ulster by the pressure of the southern Irish, it is difficult to account how the Picts of Britain should receive the fugitives. Either generosity or selfishness would have prompted them, like the Earl of Pembroke, to assist the exiles in recovering their territories; and, by that means, to endeavour to conquer a part of a fine country for themselves. But the

Picts were, it seems, strangers to the most common maxims of policy ; for, according to the system under consideration, they must have been of all nations the most tame, prodigal, and imprudent. In short, if the Irish Scots voluntarily abandoned one of the best districts of Ireland to settle in one of the most sterile divisions of North Britain, they must have been more absurd than the Hibernians of latter ages have been, perhaps very unjustly, represented ; if by violence they were driven from home, the Picts deserve the same character for permitting a band of vagabonds to seize upon one third of their dominions.

Sixth argument.

The Saxon auxiliaries of Vortigern were not so modest as the Irish Scots ; or else the Picts were a people of much less spirit than the southern Britons. When the Saxons raised their demands to an unreasonable height, the Britons disputed with them every inch of ground. They were at last overpowered ; but it was after such an expence of time and blood, that glory covered them in the midst of ruin. Had the Hibernian mercenaries encroached upon the Picts, as the Saxons did on the Britons, we might naturally suppose that the latter, instead of carrying war and desolation into a foreign country, in conjunction with the Scots, would

would have found employment for their arms at home. The unanimity in expedition which subsisted for ages between the Caledonian nations, is proof sufficient that they derived their origin from one and the same source.

THE

THE PRETENDED TESTIMONY OF FOREIGN WRITERS EXAMINED, AND CONFUTED.

General Reflections.

First appear-
ance of the
Scots.

ABOUT the middle of the fourth age, the unconquered barbarians of Caledonia became known to the Romans under the name of Picts and Scots. Marcellinus, who is the first historian who met them in Britain, was an absolute stranger to their being a new people, who then made their appearance in the island*. In the period of time between the expedition of Julius Agricola and the reign of Constantius we have already seen, that the improbability of the transmigration of a foreign colony into North Britain is so great that, without positive evidence, the story can never be believed. The abettors of the Hibernian antiquities, finding that the credit of the domestic annals of Ireland could never establish this fact, had recourse to some passages of foreign writers, which they wrested to their purpose.

* Amm. Marcell. lib. xx. The very learned and ingenious Dr. Macpherson has, in his critical dissertation on the British and Irish Scots, proved against the Bishop of St. Asaph, that Ammianus Marcellinus does not furnish even an obscure hint, that the Scots were a new people in Britain, in the reign of Constantius.

The

The impossibility of an Irish migration into North Britain between the reign of Constantius and the dereliction of Britain by Honorius, is supported by arguments equally strong with those we have produced for the period before the first of those emperors. Those who after Constantius succeeded to the imperial purple, till the days of Valentinian, were rather insulted than feared by the wild nations of Caledonia. The latter, therefore, were under no necessity to implore the assistance of foreign auxiliaries; neither can we suppose that they would cede to a pitiful band of Irish barbarians any part of those territories, which they defended, with so much spirit, against the disciplined armies of the lords of the world.

Claudian.

The supporters of the Hibernian extraction of the British Scots pretend to have found, in Claudian a direct proof of their system. That Poet, in his panegyric on Theodosius, has the following lines: Claudian's pretended authority.

Quid rigor æternus cœli; quid fidera profunt,
 Ignotumque fretum? Maduerunt Saxone fuso
 Orcades: incoluit Pictorum sanguine Thule:
 Scottorum cumulos flevit glacialis Ierne*.

But we may venture to affirm, that there is nothing in this passage conclusive in favour of the old Milesian tale.

* Claudian. de quart. consulat. Honorii.

Claudian indulged all the wantonness of a poetical fancy in this panegyric on Theodosius. It was the poet's imagination only that "warmed Thule with Pictish blood, moistened the sands of Orkney with Saxon gore, and thawed the frozen Ierne into tears for the slaughter of the Scots." It is idle, in short, to search for fact in the hyperboles of poetry; Marcellinus, though particularly fond of Theodosius, has not recorded these prodigies of valour: Even Latinus Pacatius, though a panegyrist, says no more, than that the Scot was driven back to his native fens†, and the Saxon destroyed in conflicts by sea.

examined.

Without insisting upon what shall hereafter appear at least probable, that Ireland is not meant by the Ierne of Claudian, we may aver, that there is nothing in these verses decisive concerning the origin of the Scots. If the Hibernians were of Caledonian extract; if, from the ancient ties of consanguinity, a friendly intercourse was maintained between the Irish and the inhabitants of Albany; a person of a less warm imagination than Claudian might suppose that the former sincerely lamented the misfortunes of their mother nation*.

In

† Redactum in paludes suas Scottum. Latin. Pacat. in Panegyri. Theod.

* Should it be admitted that the Scots of Valentinian's time were skilled in maritime affairs, and had passed from Ireland into North Britain, they

In Claudian's panegyric on Stilicho, there is a passage<sup>and con-
futed.</sup> which has been often transcribed with triumph in opposition to the antiquity of the British Scots.

Me quoque vicinis pereuntem gentibus inquit,
Munivit Stilicho, totam cum Scottus IERNAM
Movit; et infesto spumavit remige Tethys.
Illius affectum curis, ne bella timerem
SCOTTICA, nec Pictum tremere, nec litore toto
Prospicerem dubiis venientem Saxona ventis.

Britain is here personified; she makes her acknowledgements to Stilicho for his services to her at a very perilous conjuncture. "She owed her safety to that able commander when the Scot had put all IERNA in motion; when the ocean was agitated into a foam by hostile oars. He delivered her from the terrors of a Scottish war, from Pictish incursions, and from beholding piratical squadrons of Saxons coming to her coasts with the veering winds."

It will be hereafter shewn that the name of Ierna may, without any violence, be applied to the western division

they ought, after Theodosius had chased them to their vessels, to have directed their flight to their native island. On the contrary, Claudian's hero, or rather Claudian himself, pursues them sword in hand, into the Hyperborean ocean.

SCOTTUMQUE, vago mucrone, fecutus
Fregit Hyperboreas remis audacibus Undas.

Q

of

of Scotland, including the isles: But should the Ierna of Claudian be the same with Ireland, it would little avail the abettors of that system which we now oppose. There is no necessity to believe that the poet adhered to historical fact. Virgil, without any authority, extended the victories of Augustus to nations, whom neither he nor his lieutenants ever looked in the face †; and why should not the same privilege of invention, exaggeration, and flattery be allowed to the laureat of Honorius?

A critical
remark.

Not to insist upon the improbability that the Irish in that state of barbarism in which they were certainly involved towards the close of the fourth age, could annually transport armies into Britain, we may safely affirm, that the Tethys of Claudian was rather agitated into a foam by Saxon than by Hibernian oars. The Saxons, in the days of Honorius, were in some measure a maritime

† Incedunt victi longo ordine gentes.

Hic Nomadum genus et distinctos Mulciber Afros:

Hic Lelegas, Carasque, sagittiferosque Gelonos

Finxerat. Euphrates ibat jam mollior undis;

Indo-nitique Dahæ.

Virg. Æneid. viii.

Super Garamantas et Indos

Proferet imperium, jacet extra sidera, tellus

Extra anni solisque vias.—

Hujus in adventum jam nunc et Caspia regna

Reponsis porrent Divûm et Mæotia tellus.

Virg. Æneid. vi.

people;

people: Tethys signifies the ocean: the sea between Germany and England has some right to that title, but the channel between Ireland and Caledonia was never dignified with so high a name. This criticism is sufficient to destroy the whole force of the argument drawn from Claudian. It appears not from history that the Scots ever infested the Roman division of Britain by sea: Constantine appointed an officer called *Comes littoris Saxonici*, to take the charge of that part of the coast of the Province, which was most exposed to the piratical depredations of the Saxons; but of a *Comes littoris Scottici* or *Hibernici* we have never heard.

If the province of Valentia comprehended the country between the walls, why did not the Hibernian Scots land every other season in Galloway? How came not the Irish rovers to attempt a descent in either of the divisions of Wales or in Cumberland? Was not the coast of Lancashire almost as near to the Isle of Man, which, according to Orosius, was possessed by Scottish tribes, as any part of the continent of Caledonia was to Ireland? Why, in the name of wonder, was a bulwark of turf or stone a better security against the Irish Scots than against the Saxons of Friezeland or Holland, as both were transmarine nations with respect to the Province? Why did the Irish, with a peculiar absurdity, land always on the wrong side of the Roman walls, which they must have

Conclusive arguments.

Q 2

scaled

scaled or destroyed before they could penetrate into the province? It is impossible to believe that all their expeditions could have been so ill-concerted; and this consideration alone is sufficient to demonstrate that the Scots, whom the Roman writers so often mention, were inhabitants of Caledonia. Walls were constructed and legions employed to defend the province from their incursions, but fleets were never fitted out to intercept or destroy them at sea.

Orosius.—Isidorus.

Orosius.

The Hibernian system being deprived of every support from Claudian, let us next examine some passages of other ancient authors whom our adversaries have raised to their aid. If Orosius, a Spanish priest, found the Scots in Ireland about the beginning of the fifth age, Marcellinus met with them in Britain about the middle of the third †. Isidore of Seville, who flourished in the seventh age, says, that in his time, Ireland was indiscriminately called Scottia and Hibernia; and that the latter name proceeded from its lying over against Iberia and the Cantabric ocean ‡.

Isidorus.

† Ammian. Marcellin. lib. xx.

‡ Scottia eadem et Hibernia, proxima Britanniae insula, sed situ fecundior. Hæc ab Africo in Boream porrigitur, cujus partes priores Iberiam et Cantabricum Oceanum intendunt; unde et Ibernica dicta: Scottia autem quod ab Scottorum gentibus colitur. Isidor. Orig. lib. xiv.

On

On this etymon of Hibernia great weight is laid by ^{examined,} the abettors of the Cantabrig descent of the Irish. Should the name of Hibernia arise from the position of Ireland with respect to Iberia, Mauritania, and a part of Gaul ought to have obtained the same appellation, from a similar situation with regard to Spain. Ireland itself, from a parity of reason, ought to have a name resembling that of Britain, which lies so near it, rather than from Iberia, divided from it by an immense ocean. The bishop of Seville, the truth is, knew very little about Ireland or its inhabitants; and his ridiculous derivation of the name of Scots, is a lasting monument of his talent in etymology †.

Isidore is not the first learned prelate who gave to Ire-^{and con-}land the name of Scottia; a bishop of Canterbury, about ^{futed.} the year 605, bestowed upon that island the same appellation. We shall not dispute with the Irish that their country received the name of Scottia some centuries before it was appropriated to Caledonia. But no argument can arise in favour of their superior antiquity from that priority. A colony of the ancient Grecians possessed themselves of a district of the lesser Asia, which afterwards obtained the name of Ionia. That

† Scotti propria linguâ nomen habent a picto corpore, eo quod aculeis ferreis cum atramento, variarum figurarum stigmata anottentur. Isidor. Orig. lib. ix.

colony,

colony, and their ancestors in Greece, for a series of ages, were called Ionians, but their territories in Europe never possessed the appellation of Ionia; and, from that circumstance, will any man conclude, that the Ionians of Ephesus and Miletus were more ancient than those of Attica?

Gildas.

Gildas examined.

The testimony of Gildas seems, at first sight, more favourable to the Hibernian system than that of Isidore. This writer, with an irascible disposition, soured by the misfortunes of the times, was querulous, wrathful, scurrilous, and at no less enmity with the whole world than with the enemies of his country, the Scots, Picts, and Saxons*. It is almost needless to observe that Gildas calls the Scots and Picts transmarine nations, as Bede has explained away that appellation in a manner that is not unfavourable to the system

* Ex in Britannia (so Gildas and Bede, in imitation of the Romans, called that part of the Island which had been subject to the empire) duabus gentibus *transmarinis* vehementer Sævis, Scottorum a Circio, Pictorum ab Aquilone, calcabilis multos stupet gemitque per annos.— Tum erumpens grex catulorum, (Saxones) de cubili lænæ barbariæ tribus, &c. “Then that kennel of whelps (*the Saxons*) issued out upon us from the den of the barbarous lions:” And in another place this passionate writer says, “The fierce Saxons of ever execrable memory, detested by God and man, were admitted into the Island like so many wolves into the fold.”

which we endeavour to establish ‡. The strength of the argument against us arises from the epithet of Hibernian robbers, with which the passionate Gildas has dignified the ancestors of the Scots ||. Not to insist upon the more proper reading of the passage, as it is restored by Dr Gale §, which destroys at once the authority in favour of the Hibernian descent of the Scots, we may, upon another foundation, fairly deny the consequences generally drawn from the vague expression of Gildas. Propertius in one of his elegies gives the epithet of Hiberni to the Getes of Thrace. Gildas was remarkably fond of expressing himself in the language of poetry. His diction from so puerile an affectation partakes more of the turgid declamation of tragedy, than of the precision and simplicity of a grave historian. Had he, by way of sarcasm on the severity of the climate of Caledonia, bestowed the epithet of Hiberni on its inhabitants, he should not

‡ Transmarinas autem dicimus has gentes, non quod extra Britanniam essent positæ, sed quia a parte Brittonum erant remotæ, duobus sinibus maris interjacentibus. Bede, Hist. lib. i. c. 12.

|| Revertuntur ergo impudentes grassatores Hiberni domus, post non multum temporis reversuri.

§ Vid. Gale's edition of Gildas. Instead of *revertuntur Hiberni domus* the doctor reads more grammatically *Hibernas domus*; that is, that the Scots after committing their depredations returned home for the winter.

have

have written improperly, unpoetically, or unlike his own manner.

and con-
futed.

The British and Irish Scots spoke the same language, wore the same kind of dress, and were distinguished by every characteristical mark necessary to make a foreigner believe that both nations were originally the same people. Whether the Scots of Hibernia, or those of Albania, were the most ancient, every one was at freedom to resolve in his own way. Had Gildas positively decided in favour of the former, his authority can go no further than his confessed knowledge in antiquities. But it appears from other circumstances, that the British writer was a very bad antiquary. The Scots, according to him, infested, for the first time, the Roman province, when Maximus withdrew the legions from Britain. There is not, perhaps, any piece of ancient history better ascertained, than that a tribe of the Caledonians, under the name of Scots, made incursions into the province near seventy years before the rebellion of Maximus. The account which Gildas gives of the Roman walls betrays his ignorance in the tradition, as well as history, of his own country; and therefore it is difficult to say why the testimony of such a writer, had it even been less equivocal, should be thought decisive concerning the antiquities of a people to whose tradition and history he must, in the nature of things, have been an absolute stranger.

Bede.

Bede, a Saxon monk, flourished in the monastery of ^{Bede's} Girwy upon the Tyne about the commencement of the seventh century, and displayed uncommon talents and learning for the age in which he lived. In his history of the Saxon churches the venerable writer distinguishes, with precision, the British Scots from those of Ireland, and positively affirms that the former derived their blood and origin from the latter. Bede did not confine his genealogical enquiries to the Scots. He endeavoured to trace all the British nations to their respective origins.

The Britons, properly so called, says he, were the first inhabitants of this Island, and they originally transmigrated from the Armorican division of Gaul. The ^{genealogical account of the British nations} Picts, in an after age, seized upon North Britain; for to the name of Caledonia the Anglo-Saxon was an absolute stranger. After the Britons and Picts had possessed the Island for some ages, Britain, in its northern division, received a third nation from Ireland under the conduct of Reuda. Whether the Irish Scots obtained settlements of the Picts by force or favour was a point which Bede could not determine. He was however informed that they were called Dalreudini, from their illustrious leader Reuda, and from the Galic word

R *deal,*

deal, which, according to the venerable writer, signified a portion or division of a country *.

never implicitly adopted.

It is remarkable, that not one English or Scottish antiquary ever implicitly adopted every part of the Anglo-Saxon's system. The Picts and Scots, according to him, as separate nations, and from very different origins, possessed North Britain before the commencement of the Christian æra. Camden, Usher, the two Lloyds, Stillingfleet, Innes, and many more, rejected, some one part or other, and some the whole of Bede's account of the southern Britons; but all these learned men received without examination his system of the Hibernian extraction of the British Scots.

His mistakes

Where we have an opportunity to examine Bede's account by the criterion of collateral history, we find that he has committed a very essential mistake. The southern Britons were so far from deriving their blood from the inhabitants of Armorica, that, on the contrary, the Armoricans had transmigrated from Britain not many ages before Bede's own time. If Bede therefore was in an error with respect to the origin of a people, whose history, on account of their connection

* Duce Reuda de Hibernia egressi, vel amicitia vel ferro, fibimet, inter eos, (Pictos) fedes, quas hactenus habent vindicarunt; a quo duce hodie Dalreudini vocantur.—It is to be observed that *deal* does not signify a portion or division.

with the Romans, was known, it is much more probable that he knew nothing certain concerning the antiquities of a nation, who had not among them the means of preserving, with any certainty, the memory of events.

From the political and religious prejudices which prevailed, in the days of Bede, between the British Scots and the Saxons, we may conclude that the venerable writer had very little conversation with the antiquaries or senachies of the former nation. Had he even consulted them, very little light could be derived from them in an age of ignorance, credulity, and barbarism. Bede, on the other hand, entertained a friendly partiality for the Scots of Ireland. That people were, in his time, remarkable for monkish learning and ascetic austerities; which, together with their benevolence and hospitality to the Saxon students, who flocked into their country, recommended them, in a very high degree, to the venerable Anglo-Saxon*. The good man, we may take it for granted, embraced every opportunity of conversing with those Hibernian missionaries and pilgrims who came over in swarms into Britain, in those days of conversion and religious pilgrimage. From them he borrowed all that genealogical erudition which he displays in the beginning of his ecclesiastical history.

arise from
various
causes.

* Bed. Hist. lib. iv. c. 26.

He received
his accounts
of the Scots
from Ire-
land.

The sudden transition which Bede makes from the tale of Reuda to a panegyric on Ireland, furnishes a strong presumption that he derived his information from that quarter. Having observed, in the course of a very favourable description of Ireland, that no reptile is seen in that country, that the air destroys serpents, that the leaves of Hibernian trees and the shavings of timber are efficacious antidotes against poison; after having remarked, that the happy Island flowed with milk and honey, and was not destitute of vines; he concludes with a new declaration, as if that doctrine had been strongly inculcated upon him by his Irish friends, that the British Scots derived their origin from that fortunate country.

confuted.

It is apparent from another circumstance, that Bede borrowed his account of the Scots from the Irish. He calls the inhabitants of Iar-ghaël by the name of Dal-reudini, an appellation utterly unknown to the historians, writers of chronicles, bards, and senachies of Scotland, though common in the annals of Ireland. Bede's account of the Picts being almost word for word what has been handed down in the historical rhimes of Ireland*, furnishes a striking proof of the Hibernian origin of the whole of the Anglo-Saxon's genealogical tale: Both the Irish and he supposed that the Picts were di-

* Keating, p. 60, 61, 62.

stinguished

distinguished by that name, which, according to them, is derived from a Latin epithet, near five complete centuries before the foundation of Rome was laid by Romulus. The system of Bede being thus traced to its source, the tales of Irish bards, and those tales having been already thrown into discredit, we may infer, that the venerable writer's authority concludes nothing for the Hibernian descent of the British Scots.

To destroy, from another principle, the tale of Bede and the story of Reuda, it may not be improper to observe, that the learned Usher found out that a district in the county of Antrim, which has for many ages been distinguished by the name of *Route*, is the Dalriada of the old Irish*. Dalriada, says the ingenious prelate, derives its name from Cairbre-Riada, the son of Conaire, who held the scepter of Ireland in the third century. But we may venture to affirm that Usher, in this supposition, was very much misled. Rute or Reaidh in the old Scottish language signifies a Ram. From the first of these synonymous words, the territory in the county of Antrim, from which, it is pretended, the British Scots originally transmigrated, received the appellation of the *Route*, and from the second is to be deduced the name of Dalriada, literally the valley of the Ram.

Usher's arguments in support of Bede

* Usher. Brit. Eccles. Antiq. p. 320.

Usher

examined;

Usher quotes a patent which is preserved in the Tower of London, wherein it appears, that John king of England granted to Allan lord of Galloway the territory of Dalreth and the Island of Rachrin, which is situated over against that district †. From the syllabication of the two local names in the patent, we may conclude that the etymon we have given of Dalriada is perfectly just. Rachrin, which may, with great propriety, be reckoned an appendage to the ROUTE, signifies the ram's promontory, in the Irish tongue; and Dalriada itself being expressly called the land of Rams, in the Irish patent mentioned by the primate himself, is a circumstance that is decisive in our favour.

confuted.

Dalreath or Dalreadh, which was afterwards latinized into Dalriada, could not possibly, according to the genius of the Irish language, be derived from Cairbre-Riada, were it even certain that such a monarch ever existed. Riada signifies a *long-hand*, an appellation joined to the name of Cairbre, on account of the singular length of his hands. The Route, therefore, in propriety of language, ought to have been called Dal-Cairbre, if it must at any rate receive its name from that pretended monarch.

† Usher. ubi supra.

The primate, with all his erudition, could only produce the authority of Jocelyn and Tigernach ‡, writers of the eleventh and twelfth ages, in support of the Irish origin of the Scots in Britain. Had these writers even been less notoriously fabulous than they appear to be, it is certain that they flourished in too modern a period to know any thing of the transactions of the Irish in the dark ages, prior to the introduction of Christianity and letters by Patrick. The two writers, it is true, place the transmigration of the Scots into Britain on this side of that æra, but the testimony of the Roman writers sufficiently destroys that absurd position*.

Authority
of Jocelyn
and Tiger-
nach

Tigernach and Jocelyn contradict one another materially, and Bede, who lived more than three centuries before the first of those writers, differs toto cœlo from both; but had all the three concurred in transporting the Scots into Britain under the same leader, and in the same year, we might, with reason, presume that they all were mistaken. Usher has ascertained the bounds of Dalriada, or the *Route* in Antrim, and found its whole extent about thirty miles †. Were it even certain that Dal-

exploded.

‡ Tigernach carries down his annals to A. D. 1088, in which he died. Jocelyn compiled a life of St. Patrick from all the futile tales and traditions he could collect, and published it in the year 1175, at the desire of Thomas O'Connor, archbishop of Armagh.

* Ammian. Marcellin. lib. xx.

† Usher. ubi supra.

riada.

riada produced more men than any district of the same extent in ancient Ireland, still it is incredible, that an army could be mustered there sufficient to subdue the principality of Iar-ghaël. Should the dominion of Argyre only comprehend Braidalbin, Cantyre, Knapdale, and Lorn, the natives must have been an overmatch for the inhabitants of the small country pent up within the river Boisy and Glenfinneacht. Should it be admitted that the Dalriadans were supported in their expedition into Caledonia by some other Irish tribes, it is reasonable to suppose that the eastern Picts would have aided their friends of the West, at a time, when they confessedly had nothing to fear from any other foreign enemy.

Nennius.—General Observations.

Nennius.

The testimony of Nennius deserves little attention; he derived his intelligence concerning the origin of the Scots from the Hibernian senachies‡, and their tales have been already examined and exploded. The system of Irish antiquity which Nennius has preserved is, in many instances, diametrically opposite to those genealogical schemes, which the modern writers of Ireland have new modelled and adorned; and hence an internal proof arises concerning the uncertainty of Hibernian annals.

‡ Sic mihi peritissimi Scottorum (Hibernorum) nuntiaverunt. Nennius edit. Rog. Gale, p. 101.

As a concluding argument against the Hibernian extraction of the Scots, it may not be improper to observe, that the Caledonians might be called Hibernians, their country in general Hibernia, and the western division of it Ierna or Yverdhon, without deriving their blood from the Irish. The Saxons of England, it is well known, had their Norfolk and Suffolk, and the appellation of Southerons and Norlands are not hitherto totally extinguished among the Scots: The ancient Picts, in like manner, were divided into two great tribes, the Vecturiones and Deucaledones, the inhabitants of the northern and southern divisions, according to the testimony of Marcellinus*.

Conclusive
arguments

After the Caledonians, upon the decline of the Roman power in the southern Britain, began to infest the province in separate bodies, the two principal tribes in those incursions were distinguished by the names of Picts and Scots, by the historians of the empire. If the Picts spoke the Gaëlic or Caledonian language, they must certainly have called the territories of the Scots, Iar,

against the
Hibernian
extraction

* Eo tempore Picti in duas gentes divisi, Deucaledonas et Vecturiones. *Ammian.* Marcellin. lib. xxvii. Camdenus, vir in patria historia illustranda accuratissimus, legendum putat *Deucaledonios*, velut sic nominatos ab occidua Scotiae ora, quâ Deucaledonius oceanus irrumpit.

Eire, Erin, or Ard-Iar †, words, all of them, expressive of the situation of the country of the Scottish tribes, in opposition to the Pictish division of Caledonia; if they spoke the ancient British, they would have distinguished the country of the Scots by the name of Yverd-hon, or, as it is pronounced, Yberon or Yveron. These names being communicated to the Romans by the Britons, or by Pictish prisoners, it was natural for them to latinize them into Ierna, Jouverna, or Hibernia. In common conversation, the western Highlands are called by those who speak the Galic language IAR, or the West; and when the Hebrides are comprehended in that division of Scotland, the Galic appellation of Iar-in has been always given to the whole. The district of Arregathel, or rather Iar-ghaël, so often mentioned in the annals of Ireland and Scotland, as the first possessions of the Hibernian colonies in Britain, carries in its name a demonstration of this position, as well as a decisive argument against the ancient system of the origin of the Scots. Iar-ghaël literally signifies the *Western-Ghaël*, or the Scots, in opposition to the *Eastern-Gaël*, or the Picts, who possessed the shore of the German ocean.

† IAR signifies the West; *Eir* is a corruption of *Iar*; *Erin* is the same with *the western country*, and *Ard-Iar* is the Galic name for the western quarter.

In the neighbourhood of Drumalbin, a ridge of hills which divided the Scottish from the Pictish dominions, there is a lake, which, to this day, is called Erin. The river Erin or Ern rises from that lake, and gives its name to a very considerable division of the county of Perth. In this district there are to be seen several Roman camps to this day. The Romans could not be strangers to the name of a country where their armies remained long enough to leave such lasting memorials of themselves behind. Juvenal, from the soldiers of Agricola, might have heard of the district of Erin, which he softened into Juverna; and the troops of Theodosius might have carried the same intelligence to Claudian.

ARGUMENTS AND PROOFS

AGAINST THE

IRISH EXTRACT OF THE SCOTS.

Stillingfleet and Usher examined.

Stillingfleet
confuted.

IN vain has Stillingfleet observed, that there must have been a sea between Britain and the Ierna of Claudian.

Totam cum Scottus Iernam
Movit, et infesto spumavit remige Tethys.

Tethys, or the ocean, it has been already shewn, was rather agitated into a foam by Saxon, than by Scottish rowers. But not to insist upon that criticism, if by Ierna we are to understand IAR, the western division of Caledonia, from Glotta to Tarvisium, the many extensive arms of the sea, which indent that coast, will, at once, remove the learned prelate's objection. Should we suppose that IAR-IN, or the western Islands of Scotland, were the Ierna of Claudian, the objection will altogether vanish, as many of those Islands are at a
much

much greater distance than Ireland itself from the continent of Caledonia *.

To collect the whole argument on this head into one point of view: The Scots of Britain lived in a cold climate; their country was situated to the West of such of their neighbours as had an immediate communication with the Romans. The Irish lay under the same disadvantage of unfriendly seasons; and their Island was similarly situated. The historians and poets of the empire, and the geographers of Greece and Rome, exaggerated, either through ignorance or prejudice, the severity of the climate under which both the Scottish nations lived. From an exact conformity of genius, language, manners, dress, situation, and climate, the Scots of both the Isles had a much better title to the common appellation of Hiberni, than Italy, Spain, and a considerable part of Africa, had to the name of Hes-

The argument collected into one point.

* Stillingfleet remarks, that if *Strathern*, in the county of Perth, should be admitted to be the Ierna of Claudian, it would be ridiculous in the poet to say, that the Scots *put in motion the whole of a small district* of their country. The bishop did not recollect, that it was very common with the ancient poets to put a part of a country for the whole. Latium is often used for the Roman empire; Mycænæ for all the states of Greece; and Thule, by Claudian himself, for North Britain.

Quem littus adustæ
Horrescit Lybiæ et ratibus impervia Thule.

peria.

peria. But whether the Hibernians of the British soil *, the Hibernian robbers of a much later age †, and the Scots vanquished by Theodosius ‡, derived their origin from Ireland, or were of Caledonian extraction, is a point which Eumenius, Claudian, and Gildas, have left undetermined.

Usher examined,

It is observed by Usher ||, that Albania was not distinguished by the name of Scotia, prior to the eleventh age. The antiquaries of Scotland have quoted several passages from Bede to refute the observation of the learned prelate. But had the remark been perfectly just, it is by no means conclusive in favour of the superior antiquity of the Hibernian Scots. Were there no Scots in Ireland prior to the seventh century? for then, for the first time, that country received the name of Scotia from Isidore and Lawrence of Canterbury. We may turn the primate's argument against his own system. Marcellinus found the Scots in Britain a whole century before Orosius discovered them in Ireland; and, from a parity of reason, we might conclude that the British Scots are more ancient than the Irish friends of the ingenious prelate.

* Eumen. Panegy.

† Gildas xv.

‡ Claudian. de Quart. Consulat. Honor.

|| Brit. Eccles. Antiq. p. 383.

The learned Usher is not more happy in the argument which he deduces from the appellation of Scotia Major given to Ireland in opposition to the Scotia Minor of Britain. Donald O'Neil *, a petty king or chieftain of Ulster in the fourteenth century, and a charter granted by the emperor Sigismund to a convent of Scots and Irish at Ratibon, have made that distinction. But to a conclusion drawn in favour of the old system, from these circumstances, it may, from a parity of reason, be opposed, that the Hibernians of the age of Ptolemy were originally Britons, and not Spaniards, because that geographer gave the name of the lesser Britain to Ireland. The inhabitants of Hellas, by a similar argument, ought to have derived their origin from the Italian Magna Græcia; that is, to speak the language of some of those who are most likely to oppose our system, that the Greeks who possessed themselves of a part of Italy were older than their ancestors in Greece.

It may be here, with great propriety, observed, that nothing is more deceitful, in tracing nations to their origin, than arguments deduced from a similarity of local names in different countries. Strabo thought it an extravagant fancy to derive the Spaniards from the Ibe-

Similarity
of local
names

* In O'Neil's letter to Pope Boniface.

rians

rians of Asia; yet the Asiatic Iberia, as well as Spain, had its Iberus and Arragon *. But a conformity in a few particulars is not sufficient to persuade us, that the neighbours of the Caspian could, in an early period, transport themselves either by sea or land into the European Iberia, no more than the Albanians of the same division of Asia could send colonies to Caledonia.

furnishes
no proof of
a common
origin.

Italy, Macedonia, Asia near Caucasus, and North Britain, countries very distant from one another, produced four nations promiscuously called Albanians. Nothing can be inferred from this identity, but that they all derived their names from the mountainous face of the regions which they respectively possessed †. In the same manner, nothing can be concluded from the name of Hiberni, given, by some writers, indiscriminately to the western Caledonians, and the Irish, but that both nations lived under the same unfavourable climate, and that both were peculiarly distinguished by the same characteristical qualities, which naturally arose from their common origin.

* Cellarius in Iberia Asiatica.

† Dr. Macpherson's Dissertation, x.

Rise and Progress of the Fiction.

In vain have the Irish, and the abettors of their high antiquities, called in the aid of foreign writers to support the pretended Hibernian origin of the British Scots. That part of their history, like the exploded Milesian tale, must rest entirely on the credit of their own domestic annals; but that no degree of faith ought to be given to those annals beyond the introduction of letters, is a point which we have already very amply discussed. The authority of history having failed, it is natural to suppose that the adversaries of our system will have recourse to objections arising from reason. To do all the justice in our power to the old and popular error concerning the origin of the Scots, we shall examine with attention those objections, before we shall conclude for ever the controversy by arguments, which, though obvious, are new and decisive.

General observations.

Could ancient tradition, the belief of ages, the positive assertions of English antiquaries and Irish annalists, and the universal acquiescence of the historians of the British Scots be sufficient to establish the credit of the Hibernian descent of that nation, it must be confessed that it were idle to hope to reconcile the public judgment

On the rise and progress

T

to

to a new system so diametrically opposite to the old. But we have seen that tradition could not have extended to that period in which the transmigration of the Scots is placed, and therefore the belief of ages, which was founded upon that pretended tradition, was no more than a popular error. This error, rendered venerable by its antiquity, misled, to say no worse, the writers of the annals of Ireland, and deceived the historians of North Britain. The antiquaries of England, it must be confessed, could not be influenced by the prejudices which led astray the writers of both the Scottish nations; but the former were under no temptation to contradict or expose a tradition which was not disagreeable to themselves, though from a very different cause than that which rendered it so highly favoured in Scotland and Ireland.

of the Hi-
berno-Scot-
tish fictions.

It may not be improper, in this place, to inquire into the rise and progress of those traditionary fictions which have so much obscured the antiquities of the Scots of both the Isles. When the first dawn of learning rose among those barbarous tribes who had subverted the empire of the Romans, some scholars more profound than the rest, traced the antiquity of their respective nations to illustrious names recorded in ancient history. The Romans, Greeks, Spaniards, and other nations who
figured

figured in old times were placed at the head of the pedigree of barbarians, who, but just emerging from illiterate obscurity, had lost all memory of their own origin. The impostures of the half-learned writers of the middle ages were received with avidity and great credulity by the English, French, Spaniards, Germans, Danes, and Swedes : a part of an infatuation so universal must have extended itself to the Scots of Ireland.

The letters which St. Patrick introduced into that Island in the fifth age, were not employed in recording historical transactions for some centuries posterior to that period. The enthusiasm of the times turned all the little literature of the religious of Ireland to holier purposes than to register temporal events; which, from the secluded situation of that country, must have been very unimportant. Miracles, visions, and those sacred persons who distinguished themselves in the work of conversion, employed the whole attention of the monks, at a time that the royal line of Heremon sat in the midst of obscurity and anarchy on the Irish throne. The antiquities of the nation being thus left in the hands of illiterate bards and senachies, assumed so monstrous a form, that the polishing they have received from succeeding writers has scarcely hitherto rendered them fit for the public eye.

Cause of the
obscurity
which in-
volves the
ancient
Irish.

The fable of the Hibernian extraction of the British Scots seems to have been fabricated in Ireland long before

Æra of the
Spanish fic-
tion.

fore the bards thought of bringing a colony from Spain into that country. Bede, in the seventh age, had received intelligence of the first of those stories from the Irish senachies, but his placing it in a period beyond the reach of tradition has thrown absolute discredit upon the whole. In the period between Bede and Nennius, who, for the first time, mentioned the Cantabrig descent of the Scots of Ireland, some learned bard or monk discovered that Spain was called Iberia, and, upon the similitude between that name and Hibernia, built the whole fabric of the Milesian tale. To obviate all scepticism concerning a story which wore the face of improbability, it became necessary for succeeding writers to give assurances to the world, that letters and polite arts were cultivated in Ireland no less than seventeen hundred years before its conversion to the Christian faith by St. Patrick.

Cause of the
darkness
which
covers the
British
Scots.

When monkish learning flourished in Ireland, the Scots of Britain, by an uninterrupted series of hostilities with the Britons, Picts, and Saxons, were diverted from cultivating letters, which alone could enable them to look back into their antiquities, or to transmit any memory of their actions to posterity. Their exploits in the field died away for want of the means of perpetuating them in the closet. The monks of Ireland, as it was manifest to the whole world that both the Scottish nations were originally the same people, made an easy acquisition of
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an illiterate, though brave people, and obtruded upon the world that system of the origin of the Caledonian Scots, which has been, for many ages, almost universally received.

Negative Arguments.

Had the more ancient genealogists of the little prin-
cipality of Argadia* discovered that there was a con-
siderable district in Peloponnesus, the name of which
so nearly resembled the latinized appellation of their
own country, it is probable they would have traced
their ancestors to an Arcadian origin. The Arcadians
were brave, and a respectable people in Greece†, and
their being older than Jupiter and the moon would
have highly recommended them to the Scottish sena-
chies.

First argu-
ment.

Had the first fabricators of the fabulous history of
Scotland found out that there were Albanians in the
North of Asia, Albanians in the army of Alexander
the Great, and Alban senates and kings in Italy, it is
at least doubtful whether they would have condescended
to deduce their nation from Ireland. This conjecture

Second ar-
gument.

* The principality of Iar-ghaël, or Argyle, was called Argadia by the monkish writers of the middle ages.

† Δοκεῖ δε παλαιότατα ἔθνη εἶναι τὰ Ἀρκαδικὰ τῶν Ἑλλήνων, &c. Strabo, l. viii.

is neither fanciful or extravagant: The author of an old Scottish chronicle preserved by Innes ‡, having, it seems, read Solinus *, derives the Picts and Scots from the Albanian Scythians. But the monks of Ireland found out Iberia before the senachies of Caledonia had the good fortune to meet either with the Scythians, or any Albanian beyond the limits of their own country.

Objections
answered.

The Irish, it may be objected, were too obscure and inconsiderable a people in Europe to tempt the Scots to deduce their origin from them, if the story had not actually any foundation in fact; especially as their neighbours and enemies to the South traced themselves to an illustrious ancestry of Romans and Trojans. The Scots of Albany entertained a very different idea of the Irish nation. Hibernian missionaries had converted the greatest part of the Scots from the errors of the Pagan superstition; Columba was the great apostle of the Picts, and became afterwards the tutelar saint of the united Caledonian kingdoms. Legions of monks and saints swarmed from Ireland into North Britain in those days of conversion and religious peregrina-

‡ Gentes albo crine nascuntur ab assiduis nivibus, et ipsius capilli color genti nomen dedit, et inde vocantur Albani, de quibus originem duxerunt Scotti et Picti. Innes' Critical Essay, Append. No. 2.

* Solin. Polyhist. xxv.

nation.

nation. It was natural for an illiterate people, like the British Scots, to believe that a nation who produced these holy and very extraordinary men was one of the most illustrious in the world. Whether the zealous missionaries, among other pious frauds, endeavoured to inculcate on their converts a belief of the stupenduous antiquity of the Irish nation, and the Hibernian extraction of the Scots, to promote the good cause of Christianity, by procuring to themselves a favourable reception in Albany, is very difficult to determine. That those apostles served in the double capacity of bards and teachers of the faith is apparent from the appellation of CHLERI *, given, in the old poems and traditions of the Scots, indiscriminately to the Irish emigrants of both professions.

But, be that as it will, it is certain that swarms of Irish bards accompanied into Caledonia those Hibernian missionaries who first converted the majority of the Picts and Scots to Christianity. It was convenient for the divine, that the bard should propagate a belief of the connexion between the Scots of both the Isles; and the authority of the former could establish any doctrine in the minds of an ignorant, credulous, and superstitious people. The senachies were impudent, the bards formidable, and both were eloquent. If any scepticism

The Hibernian tales inculcated by Irish missionaries and bards.

* Chleri, from Clericus.

remained

remained against their well-told tales, the missionaries destroyed it altogether by the weight of their sanctified character. This system, once established, was propagated, and became the traditional belief of after ages. The little progress that learning made in Scotland when its first histories were written, could not enable the zealous abettors of its antiquities to overturn that system of the origin of the nation, which had been so long obtruded upon the world; and the Scottish writers who, in a much later period, distinguished themselves in critical inquiries into the history of their ancestors, were at more pains to adorn the fictions of their predecessors, than to expose their absurdities.

Objections
answered

Some learned men have drawn an argument against our system from the silence of the Romans concerning the Scots till after the commencement of the fourth age. Their not being mentioned before that century, say they, argues strongly that they must have been a new people in Britain. That this is an unjust conclusion will appear from collateral examples. Tacitus has not mentioned any national names in North Britain but those of Caledonii and Horestii; yet it is certain that the Vecturiones and Deucaledones of Marcellinus, the Mæatæ of Dion Cassius, the Gadeni, Cantæ, and Epidii of Ptolemy, possessed that country. Ptolemy, it must be confessed, knew nothing of the inhabitants of

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the

the northern Britain, under the name of Scots ; he was equally a stranger to the Picts, Mæatæ, and Attacotti. But, if he has neglected to mention the Scots of Britain, he has been equally unjust to those of Ireland ; a circumstance very strange, if that country was, as Bede says, overstocked with tribes of that name before Caledonia received any colony from abroad.

Tacitus in his description of Germany has omitted the Saxons. Ptolemy, soon after that celebrated historian, found that warlike nation on the confines of the Chersonesus Cimbrica. Germany is for the first time mentioned by Julius Cæsar ; and are we to suppose, from that circumstance, that the inhabitants of that extensive division of Europe came, in the days of the illustrious writer, like a cloud of locusts from an unknown country ? The Franks and Allemans were not heard of before the third century ; yet those nations, in whom the Catti, Chauci, Cherusci, Agravarii, the Teutones, and the Cimbri, in a confined sense, were lost, were never once thought to have been a new people, who had enslaved, destroyed, or expelled, the old inhabitants of those territories which they possessed in Germany. These collateral examples form a complete answer to the objection against our system, which arises from the silence of the Romans concerning the Picts and Scots till the beginning of the fourth age.

by collateral
examples.

Positive Proofs.

Proofs of the
Caledonian
extraction
of the Scots.

To dwell no longer on negative arguments against the Hibernian system, we shall proceed to positive proofs of the Caledonian extraction of the British Scots. The very ingenious author of some dissertations lately published, has discussed this subject with so much ability and exactness, that little is left to be done but to collect into one point of view the most striking of his arguments. To these arguments we shall annex some observations, to quash for ever a system which has been so long imposed for truth upon the world.

First proof.

Alba or Albin, it has been already observed, was the first name given to this island, by the Gaël, who transmigrated from Belgium into the more elevated country of Britain. Hence proceeded the Albion of the Greeks, and the Albium of the Roman language. The inhabitants of mountainous countries, who, from their situation, have very little intercourse with other nations, and who were never subject to a foreign yoke, are remarkably tenacious of old local names, and their aboriginal customs, manners, and language. We accordingly find, that the ancient Scots, in all the ages to which our information extends, agreed in calling Scotland Alba or Albania. The Highlanders and the inhabitants of the

Hebrides have, to this day, no other name but Alba for Scotland, and they invariably call themselves Albanich, or genuine Britons. The uninterrupted use of this national appellation, from the earliest account we have of their history, furnishes a moral demonstration that they are the true descendants of the first inhabitants of Britain. Had they been of Irish extraction, they and their ancestors would have undoubtedly assumed a name more suitable to their origin.

The Belgic nations, who transmigrated into South Bri-^{Second proof.}tain before the descent of Julius Cæsar, retained the name of those communities on the continent from which they respectively derived their blood*. The auxiliaries of Vortigern preserved long their original name of Saxons, and the Scots who speak the Galic language have no other name for England or its inhabitants than *Sasson* and *Sassonich*. But if the ancient Scots have preserved among them the true name of the English, for so many ages after it has been disused by that nation itself, it is much more likely that they must have retained their own indigenous name.

Had the Scots been originally Irish, *Erinich* and^{Third proof.} not *Albanich* would have been their proper name. So far were they from adopting the name of their neigh-

* Cæsar, lib. v.

bours of Hibernia, that it is well known that both the old Irish and the inhabitants of the north of Scotland promiscuously call themselves Gaël, or the posterity of the Gauls, who first transmigrated into Britain from the continent. The Welsh, in ancient times, distinguished the Scots of both the British Isles by the appellation of Gaidhel, which, as the DH are invariably quiescent in Celtic words, is much the same with Gaël, in the pronunciation. Should then the Scots be of Irish extract, it must naturally follow that the Picts sprung from the same source, a doctrine no less absurd than it is new.

Fourth
proof.

From the name of the district of Iar-ghaël, which, it has been always said, was the first territory possessed by the Hiberno-Scottish colony, there arises a very decisive argument in favour of our system. Iar-ghaël is not the name of the country, but of those who inhabited it from the earliest times. It signifies the *Western-Gaël* in opposition to the *Eastern-Gaël*, or the Picts, who possessed the shore of the German ocean. But what is conclusive against the Irish system is, that *Caëldoch*, or the country of the Gaël, which the Romans softened into Caledonia, is the only name by which the Highlanders distinguish that division of Scotland which they themselves possess.

We

We shall now leave it to the candour of the unprejudiced, and the common sense of mankind, whether there does not, upon the whole, arise a demonstration, that the first colony of Gaël or Gauls who transmigrated into Britain from the continent, and were afterwards driven northward by the pressure of other interlopers, are the progenitors of the Scots of North Britain and Ireland. The true cause why the name of Scotti was not heard of till the days of Marcellinus, or rather of Porphyrius is, that it was a contumelious name*. It was for the same reason that the genuine offspring of the old Caledonians, the Highlanders, have never adopted a name which carried reproach in its meaning.

Why the Irish obtained, in the days of Orosius, the name of Scots, when their transmigration from Caledonia was so remote, requires to be explained. The name of Scotti was communicated to the Romans by the Picts and Britons. The Britons and Romans discovering a perfect resemblance in the manners, customs, dress, arms, and language of the Iar-ghaël, or western Caledonians, and the Irish, agreed to call both nations by one common name. The Irish being no strangers to the military reputation that their friends of Caledonia had acquired against the Romans and their provincials, either adopted their name, or acquiesced afterwards in

* Dr. Macpherson's Dissertations.

an appellation which some writers had imposed upon them. The illiterate, and consequently the bulk of the Irish nation, were never reconciled to this innovation. They preserved the Caledonian designation of Gaël, or the name of Erinich, which they had assumed after their transmigration into Ireland; and the adventitious names of Scotti and Scottia fell at last into total desuetude.

In the course of the preceding discussion, the Author of the Introduction has laid no stress upon the testimony of the Poems of Ossian. Having rejected the Hibernian bards, there might be an appearance of partiality in drawing authorities from the ancient poet of Caledonia. In the present state of the argument, there is no need of his assistance. The fabric we have raised demands no collateral prop; it even can bestow the aid it does not require. The perfect agreement between Ossian and the genealogical system we have established, has placed his æra beyond the commencement of the popular opinion of the Hibernian descent of the Scots; which was old enough to be placed in a period of remote antiquity by Bede, who flourished in the beginning of the seventh age.

RELIGION

OF THE

ANCIENT BRITISH NATIONS.

Preliminary Reflections.

NO weary traveller ever issued forth with more joy ^{Observations.} from a barren desert into the skirts of a pleasant and well cultivated country, than the Author of the Introduction quits the sterile subject of Scottish and Irish Antiquities. But to decide finally a point so long agitated was a part of the province which he had chosen for himself. The origin of nations, like a river near its source, presents nothing that is either beautiful or great. It is only when history descends into the cultivated periods of a well formed community, that it becomes an object of pleasure, and the means of improvement. We have still a long journey to make; but the way is strewed with some flowers.

To an investigation of their origin, it may be proper ^{Modern historians} to add a brief inquiry into the Religion of the Ancient ^{blamed.} British Nations. This subject has not suffered less from
the

the negligence, than the former did from the vanity and prejudice of historians. Some complain that the ancients have not thrown any considerable light upon the northern nations; others affirm that the opinions and actions of Barbarians are unworthy of any memory. The first observation is unjust; the latter is the result of a pride incident to polished times.

Author's
double
source of in-
formation

Though few of the Romans, like the first Cæsar, carried a talent for writing into the field, the inquiries of their historians extended to the characteristical manners of the nations whom that illustrious people subdued. We find, accordingly, that there are facts preserved sufficient to prove that the best qualities of the modern Europeans are but the virtues of their ancestors separated from ferocity and barbarism. Nor is it from the ancients only we are to derive our information. The opinions of our forefathers ought to be traced among those of their posterity, whom their situation excluded from any considerable commerce with strangers; such, till of late years, were the inhabitants of a part of Wales, and such still are some Irish tribes, and the natives of the mountains of Scotland.

enables him
to advance
something
new.

Possessed of this channel to a knowledge of the character of the ancient Celtæ, we may, perhaps, be able to advance something new upon the subject; and by applying the accounts of the ancients to the criterion of the living manners and indigenous opinions of an un-
mixed

mixed race of men, rescue some facts from the shades of doubt and uncertainty. The character of a people must be gathered from an inquiry into those prejudices and principles of the human mind which are the motives of their actions. To take a cursory review of the religious opinions of our remote ancestors, is the most direct path to a knowledge of those manners, which so remarkably distinguished them from the polished nations of antiquity. An ample field for disquisition presents itself; but it is more the purpose of the Author to give a clear and concise idea of the subject, than to deviate into dissertations, which, without being satisfactory, might assume an appearance of ingenuity and learning.

Their Idea of the Unity of God.

Religion is one of those few things which seldom receive any improvement from time. Being an universal concern, it naturally becomes a subject of general inquiry; and every time it is turned in the mind it suffers additional corruption, from those vain superstitions and fears, which are inherent in human nature. The original opinions of mankind concerning God were the most simple, noble, and just. We find that an adequate notion of the Divinity was so far from growing with the progress of the art of thinking, that the Celt, in the midst of his forest, owned but one Lord of the Uni-

General remark on religion.

verse *, when the Academic on the banks of Ilyffus, animated into Gods his own abstracted ideas.

Religion of
the Celtæ.

The information of the ancients did not extend to the Celtæ when they continued in a state of nature, and consequently we can form no judgment concerning their aboriginal ideas on the subject of religion. When they became first known to the writers of Greece and Rome, they were formed into communities, subject to some kind of government, and they had an order of men established among them who were not only the superintendants, but perhaps the inventors of their religious ceremonies and opinions. It is, however, probable that, like other savage nations ‡, they had some imperfect notion of a Supreme Being, before the Druids formed that philosophical system of religion which had such a wonderful effect on their national character and manners.

* UNUM DEUM, fulguris effectorum, Dominum hujus universi SOLUM agnoscunt. Procop. Goth. lib. iii. Regnator omnium DEUS, cætera subjecta atque parentia. Tacit. de mor. Germ. xxxix. Non diffitentur UNUM DEUM in cœlis. Helmold. lib. i. Celtæ colunt quidem Deum. Max. Tyr. Differt. xxxviii.

‡ Some tribes of American Indians have an imperfect idea of God. The Choctaws, in particular, acknowledge that there is a NAHULLA CHITO, or Great Spirit, but as he never met either them or their fathers in the woods, to assist them in the chase, or taught them those arts which he communicated to the Europeans, they pay him no divine honours.

The

The name, or rather title, by which the divinity is distinguished in all the languages of the ancient, as well as most of those of modern Europe, is sufficient to demonstrate that polytheism was not known to the old Celtæ. The ΔΙΣ of the Greeks, their ΘΕΟΣ, and the oblique cases of their ΖΕΥΣ, the Dis, Ditis pater, and Deus of the Romans, are manifestly derived from DE, DI, TI or DIA, the only appellation by which God is known to those who speak the Galic of Britain and Ireland †. DE, DI or DIA literally signifies the PERSON, by way of eminence, or rather The HE, if we can, with any propriety, use that expression.

Characte-
ristical name
of God.

That the unity of the Supreme Being was one of the fundamental tenets of the religion inculcated by the Druids* on their followers, we have reason to believe, notwithstanding the positive assertions of many ancient writers to the contrary. The old Gauls were said to worship three divinities under the appellations of TEUTATES, HESUS, and TARANIS‡; but these three names

Idea of his
Unity.

† E in the Galic language signifies HE, which, by prefixing the article D makes DE, or, as it is pronounced, DI, or DIA, literally the BEING, or GOD, emphatically.

* Aerem et aquam venerantur Adorant autem tantummodo et Deum nuncupant illum qui cœlum et terram fecit.

‡ Et quibus immitis placatur sanguine diro
TEUTATES, horrensque feris alteribus HESUS,
Et TARANIS Scythicæ non mitior ara Dianæ. Lucan, lib. i.

are manifestly titles of one Supreme Being, and not three separate intelligences to whom divine honours were paid. TEUTATES, or DE-TAT-UAS signifies *the God that is above*: HESUS is derived from the same simple idea with DE; from Es, or, with an emphasis, HES, which means HE, or *the Being*; and TARANIS is the epithet of THUNDERER, given by all nations to the Supreme Divinity †.

Their pretended Polytheism.

Religion
subject to
corruption.

The most rational systems of religion have been always found to deviate into absurdity and superstition among the ignorant multitude. The human mind, naturally timid, is apt to clothe with terrors every thing which it does not sufficiently comprehend. The bulk of the Celtæ, therefore, almost corrupted into polytheism the philosophical opinion of the Druids concerning God.

† It has been the opinion of some learned men that TEUTATES is a composition of DI or DEU, God, and TAD or TAT, father. But we may oppose to this etymon, that TAT for father is only used in a familiar sense by very young children, when they address themselves to a parent; for, according to the genius of the Galic language, it can never be used by grown persons. It is not therefore in any degree probable that a title, in itself a diminutive, was applied to that Great Spirit who pervaded the vast body of the universe. Were a stranger to hear some very good Christians in the mountains of Scotland addressing, at this day, their prayers to the Supreme Being, he might suppose that the worship of TEUTATES, TARANIS, and HESUS were not yet abolished in that country. O DHE TAT 'UAS! 'STU HESAS aird! 'Sleat TORAN nan Nial fein. O God, WHO ART ABOVE! Thou art HE, the highest! Thine is the MUR-MURING noise of the Clouds.

The

The doctrine concerning the Divinity, which Pythagoras and his disciples first broached in the South of Europe, was the same with that of the Druids, and perhaps borrowed by the philosopher || from that order of men. They looked upon the Divinity as the soul of the world; a spirit, which diffusing itself through all nature, gave, in a particular manner, life to men and all other animals ‡. From this system of the universality of God, the Celtic nations naturally deduced an idea, that his presence was most conspicuous in those parts of the universe which were endued with most beauty and action. The heavenly bodies, on account of their splendor, magnitude, and motion; the elements of fire, air, and water, on account of their rapidity and invincible force; were thought to possess an extraordinary proportion of that active spirit which pervaded the whole body of nature.

Philosophical opinion of the Druids on that subject.

|| Pythagoras, it is said, travelled into Thrace, and borrowed many of his philosophical opinions from the Thracians. Vid. Joseph. cont. App. lib. i. He passed the later years of his life in Magna Græcia; and consequently became acquainted with the theology of the Samnites and other Celtic nations, who possessed the neighbourhood of Crotona. He also studied philosophy under Abaris, the Hyperborean; (vid. Suid. in Pythag.) and, according to the testimony of one of his followers, heard the opinions of the Gauls concerning religion. Alexander in libro de symbolis Pythagoricis, vult Pythagoram Gallos audivisse. Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. i.

‡ Deum esse animum per naturam rerum omnem intentum et commentem ex quo nostri animi carperentur, Cicer. de Nat. Deor. lib. i. Deus est animus per universam rerum naturam commentem et intentus, ex quo etiam animalium omnium vita capiatur. Min. Felix. xix.

According

Reverence
for great na-
tural ob-
jects.

According to this system of theology, it was natural for the Celtæ to direct their attention to those objects in which the active principle which diffused itself through the universe seemed most apparently to exert itself. The heavenly bodies, and what philosophers call the elements, were proper emblems of a Divinity, whose chief properties were immensity, activity, and force. It is likely, therefore, that the veneration which the Celtæ shewed, upon every occasion, for the Sun, Moon, Stars, Fire, great collections of water, and for Forests and Mountains, proceeded originally from an opinion that these great objects were the best symbols of the Supreme Being*.

Belief in a
Providence.

The belief of a providence, without which no religion can exist, must, in a peculiar manner, have been the result of that which the Celtæ professed. God was not only the sole agent of the operations of nature, but even the principal part of which nature itself consisted; not so much the giver and preserver of life, as he was that life itself which animated every living thing. From this philosophical system opinions arose among the bulk of the Celtæ, which almost deviated into polytheism. As it

* Eos (scilicet Barbaros) DINO (in the Celtic language TIEN or TIN signifies Fire) ait nymphodorus sub dio mactare existimantes ignem et aquam Deorum esse simulacra. Clem. Alex. Cohort. ad Gent. Barbari omnes Deum quidem admittunt signa vero alii alia. Ignem Persæ quotidianum, voracem, insatiabilem Mons Capadocibus et Deus et juramentum et simulacrum. Palus Mæotis et Tanais Massagetis. Max. Tyrius. Diff. xxxviii.

was

was the business of God to do every thing, so they thought that the chief wisdom of man should consist in penetrating into his designs, and in endeavouring to avert such of his decisions as might be detrimental to themselves. They, for this purpose, not only addressed their prayers and sacrifices to the Divinity through those symbols we have already mentioned, but also used divinations to discover his intentions, and practised charms to turn the natural course of events.

Their pretended Worship of the Heavenly Bodies.

From their attention to the principal objects of nature there gradually arose a belief among the Celtæ ^{of Subaltern intelligences.} that the heavenly bodies and elements, instead of being symbols of the Supreme Divinity, were the residences of subaltern intelligences *. These inferior spirits, being immediately subordinate to God, had access to know his intentions, and it was in their power to forewarn mankind of them by certain signs and tokens. But that divine honours were paid to those beings who resided in different natural objects was certainly the mistake of the writers of Greece and Rome. To prove this seeming paradox we need only have recourse to the

* Thulitæ complures Genios colunt. Aereos, Terrestres, Marios et alia minora Dæmonia, quæ in aquis fontium et fluminum versari dicuntur. Procop. Goth. lib. ii.

true Celtic names of those heavenly bodies which are universally said to have been objects of worship to the old northern nations.

Pretended
worship of
the sun ex-
amined.

CRI-AN, or GRIAN, from which ought to be deduced the Apollo Grannius and Grynæus of the ancients, is the appellative by which, in all ages, the Celtæ distinguished the Sun †. The words are manifestly derived from CRI-EIN, signifying the trembling fire, which, in the Galic language, carries an idea too mean to be applied to a God. RE, Eafga, but most commonly

† We may venture to affirm that both Virgil and his old commentator Servius were mistaken in their etymon of Grynæus.

His tibi, Grynæi nemoris dicatur origo

Nequis fit lucus, quo se plus jacet Apollo. Virg. Eclog. vi.

A Gryna Mæsiæ civitate, ubi est locus, arboribus multis jucundus, gramine floribusque variis, omni tempore, vestitus. Servius in vi. Eclog. There was some years since a stone dug out of the ruins of the Roman pretenture, between the Scottish firths, inscribed to Apollo Grannius. It was an established maxim of policy among the Romans, rather to adopt the Gods of the nations whom they had subdued, than to propagate their own religion among the conquered. Grynæus and Grannius are evidently derived from the Celtic GRIAN; which is composed of CRI, trembling; and TEIN, fire. In the oblique cases TEIN makes THEIN, which is pronounced EIN, or AN; the consonants which begin the nominative of Celtic words being invariably quiescent in the genitive; so that CRI-EIN, or CRI-AN, literally signifies the *trembling fire*, in allusion to the sun's appearance to the eye. Ossian countenances this etymon of CRIAN in his address to that luminary. 'Stu CRI aig dorfa n'airdiar. When thou TREMBLEST at the gates of the West.

GELLACH*, are the Celtic names of the moon; RE-UL, or rather RINNAC, signifies a star. These appellations carry in their meaning a demonstration that the heavenly bodies were not worshipped by our ancestors. GELLACH is literally a pale or wan complexion by an emphasis; and RINNAC, a point of light; titles utterly inconsistent with the supposed divinity of the objects which bore them.

It is certain that the Celtic nations thought that the heavenly bodies were the residences of intelligences subordinate to God. These spirits were distinguished by the name of AISE †, a word expressive of their feebleness and imbecillity in comparison of DE, the Supreme Divinity. But we have reason to believe, from the fol-

The heavenly bodies animated by inferior intelligences.

* *Gellach* is derived from GEAL, fair or pale. RE signifies a smooth, and EASGA a wan complexion. RE-UL, a star, seems to be derived from RE-EIL, as it were another moon; and RINNAC means literally a point or a spark of light. The full moon is also called LUAN, i. e. *full*; from which the *Luna* of the Romans. Vid. sect. on the Celtic language.

† AISE, generally used in the Galic language with the article D' or T' prefixed to it, signifies a ghost or spirit. AISE is perhaps the original of the Asæ of the northern nations. Duodecim sunt Asæ divinis afficiendi honoribus Odinus supremus et antiquissimus Asarum. Edda Island. DE ALMEGTE-AAS, in the language of Scandinavia, signifies Almighty God. It is remarkable that the Highlanders, when they speak contemptuously of the person and parts of any man, call him An D'AISE, or the ghost; which is an argument that their ancestors did not worship the AISE, or the spirits which resided in the elements.

Y

lowing

lowing circumstance, that GRIAN-AIS, or the Spirit of the Sun, was anciently peculiarly honoured in Caledonia. In the confines between Badenoch and Strathspey, two districts in the county of Inverness, there is a very extensive heath which goes by the name of SLIA GRIAN-AIS, or the Plain of the Spirit of the Sun. The river Spey, which is there deep and rapid, borders this heath on the South; and a chain of craggy mountains, in the form of a half moon, interspersed with precipices and a few naked trees, confines it on the North. It is entered towards the West by a narrow pass formed by the near approach of the Spey and the mountains; and deep woods anciently skirted it on the eastern side.

A place of
worship.

This sequestered heath swells towards the center into several eminences, upon the most of which there are still to be seen several circles of stone, resembling, though in miniature, the famous Stone Henge on the plain of Salisbury. These monuments of antiquity, standing in a place altogether unfit for culture, have received no injury but from time, and are consequently more entire than any other of the same kind in the Highlands and Scottish Isles. The diameter of the area of the largest is not quite two hundred feet, and in the center of each arises a conical pile of loose stones. Concerning the use to which these rude fabrics were anciently converted there remains not the vestige of a tradition in that country; but the name which the place

place bears, demonstrates that they were erected in honour of the Sun.

Their superstitious Ceremonies.

Among an unmixed race of men, like the inhabitants of the mountains of Scotland, the superstitions and prejudices of their ancestors are handed down without much alteration through a long series of ages. A stranger, in hearing the ancient Scots talking with great respect of the Spirit of the Sun, the Spirit of the Mountain, the Spirit of the Storm, and the Genius of the Sea, might be tempted to think, that, like what is reported of their Celtic ancestors, they still paid divine honours to the intelligences who were thought to reside in the elements. If he saw them avoiding to bathe themselves in a spring, and never mentioning the water of rivers without prefixing to it the epithet of excellent*; if, above all, they should be seen, according to an annual custom, not hitherto altogether disused, kindling a fire on a rock on the first of May in honour of the Sun, and giving to that luminary the titles of DAY †, and

Reverence
for inferior
intelligences;

* FIR-UISE, or *genuine water*, in opposition to standing pools, or small brooks, which are simply called UISE.

† AN LO, *the day*; by way of eminence.

the *light of heaven* †, and avoiding to call him by his proper, though derogatory name, of GRIAN, any man might conclude that they still remained in the shades of heathenish ignorance and superstition.

for natural
objects.

But should the ancient Scots themselves be asked why they shew such a superstitious regard for natural objects, they would reply, That it is by no means proper to bathe themselves in a fountain, lest the *elegant** Genius that resides in it should be offended and remove to another place; and that the epithet of *excellent* ought in propriety to be prefixed to the water of rivers on account of its beauty, activity, and force. “We kindle,” say they, “the BEL-TEIN †, or the Fire of the Rock, on the first of May, to welcome the Sun after his travels behind the clouds and tempests of the dark months §; and it would be highly indecent not to

† SOLUS NEAV, *the light of heaven*. The Roman Sol is perhaps derived from the Celtic SOLUS, which signifies light.

* Min-thais in Tobair.

† BEL-TEIN is a composition of BEL, a rock; and TEIN, fire. The first day of May is called *La Bel tein*, or the day of the fire on the rock.

§ The Armoricans and the Gael of North Britain call the winter, and particularly the month of November, MIS-DU, or the black month; because in that season the sky is generally obscured with clouds. Lhuyd. Archæ. Brit.

honour

honour him with titles of dignity, when we meet him with joy on our hills”.

It is however certain that the Caledonians kindled the ^{Ceremony of} BEL-TEIN more for the purposes of divination and incantment than as a mark of their respect for the Sun. The ceremonies still used by the lower sort of people, for such only light up the BEL-TEIN in our days, are evident remains of the superstitions of the Druidical system of religion. It was a custom, till of late years, among the inhabitants of whole districts in the North of Scotland, to extinguish all their fires on the evening of the last day of April. Early on the first day of May some select persons met in a private place, and, by turning with great rapidity an augre in a dry piece of wood, extracted what they called the *forced* or *elementary* fire*. Some active young men, one from each hamlet in the district, attended at a distance, and, as soon as the *forced fire* was kindled, carried part of it with great expedition and joy to their respective villages. The people immediately assembled upon some rock or eminence, lighted the BEL-TEIN, and spent the day in mirth and festivity.

The ceremonies used upon this occasion were founded upon opinions of which there is now no trace remain-

* TEIN-EGIN, or the forced fire. The practice of extracting the TEIN-EGIN is not yet altogether discontinued among the ignorant vulgar.

the Beltein. ing in tradition. It is in vain to inquire why those ignorant persons, who are addicted to this superstition, throw into the BEL-TEIN a portion of those things upon which they regale themselves on the first of May. Neither is there any reason assigned by them for decking branches of mountain-ash * with wreaths of flowers and heath, which they carry, with shouts and gestures of joy, in procession three times round the fire. These branches they afterwards deposite above the doors of their respective dwellings, where they remain till they give place to others in the succeeding year.

These and many other extraordinary and superstitious ceremonies, used upon this occasion, have, it is certain, much of the appearance of religious worship paid by the ancient Caledonians to the Sun. The rude monuments which, as we have already observed, bear still the name of GRIAN-AIS, seem, at first sight, to put the certainty of the existence of polytheism among the Celtæ beyond any dispute; but we may venture to affirm, that neither of those circumstances furnishes a conclusive argument upon that head.

* Clou-än-BEL-TEIN, i. e. the split branch of the fire on the rock. Those who have ingrafted Christianity on many of the superstitions of their remotest ancestors have now converted the Clou-än-BEL-TEIN into a cross.

Their

Their Divinations.

Though it was a fundamental maxim in the opinions of the Celtæ concerning God, that he was the sole agent in all the operations of nature, they were far from supposing that his decrees were predetermined and unalterable. Their first business, therefore, as has been already observed, was to penetrate into his designs by means of divination, and afterwards to endeavour to avert from themselves such of those designs as might be detrimental, by the assistance of sacrifice, prayers, and enchantment. The element of Fire, and above all, the Sun, which is the source of it, were objects in which the soul of the world seemed most manifestly to exert itself; and consequently they, more than any other part of nature, employed the attention of a superstitious people: and this attention soon degenerated into those ridiculous ceremonies which we have just described. As such circular piles of stones as we have already mentioned are only to be met with on plains, we may conclude that they were only artificial eminences raised for the BEL-TEIN, in places where *rocks*, from which it originally derived its name, could not be found.

Divina-
tions, sacri-
fices, and
inchant-
ments.

Reflections.

We have in our hands a positive proof that the Sun was not an object of worship among the ancient Caledonians.

The Sun
not worship-
ped by our
ancestors;

nians. A poem, the composition of which is placed beyond the introduction of Christianity into the north Britain, has preserved the real opinion of our ancestors concerning the Spirit of the Sun. The subject of the piece is a war between two Scandinavian chiefs, in which one of them, having the misfortune to fall into the hands of his enemy, gives occasion to the following simile:

“ Seized amidst the flock of armies—Clugar struggled in all his thongs, and rolled in wrath his red eyes.—Thus hovering over the bleak waves of the North,—when GRIAN-AIS sleeps, wrapt in his cloud, a sudden frost comes on all his wings.—He struggles, he loudly roars.—Wide over the broad regions of snow is heard a voice!—His large red eyes flame though the dusky evening: The Cruglians shrink to their caves*.”

nor objects
of nature.

Had GRIAN-AIS been a God in Caledonia, it is not probable that a bard of that country would have treated

* Cealta measc comhfri nan Sloi'

Do Spairn, CLUGAIR a neart nan ial.

Thionta 'huil dearg bholtach na chean.

Marfin, air Tón frioghach, fa noir
Nuar Shuanas GRIAN-AISE na nial fein

Thic reöda air itta gu tean.

'Sé spairn 'Sé fgarta gu geur.

Fadda 'hál air fhuar thír ant' 'heachda,

Chualas gu'—A dhearg—huil mhór;

Laffa roi fmál dubrha na h'oicha.

Dhruit fiol Chrugli do charric na ncós.

him

him with so little respect. The terrors which the poet has placed around him, serve only to heighten the ridicule of his distress. The whole, in short, is absolutely inconsistent with that prescience and power, which are attributes necessary to constitute a Divinity. But if the intelligence who resided in the Sun, and who was peculiarly honoured by an unmixed branch of the Celtæ, could not, in their opinion, extricate his wings from the effects of a frosty evening, we may justly conclude, that the spirits placed in less dignified objects of nature, were actually what they were called, AISE, or feeble shadows ||.

To collect into one point of view the opinion of the Celtic nations upon the subject of religion, they originally believed that the Supreme Divinity DE, as the soul of the world, pervaded the whole body of nature. This philosophical idea degenerated, among the bulk of the people, into a supposition that some objects of nature, instead of being animated by God himself, became the residences of spirits, who, in subordination to him, di-

General reflections.

|| The Celtic AISE is the fountain from which we ought to derive the *Aisoi dii* and *ÆSAR* of the ancient Hetrurians, as well as the *ANSES* or *ASES* of the northern nations.

'*Aisoi dii* apud Tyrrhenos. Hesych. Quod *ÆSAR* Etruscâ linguâ Deus vocatur. Sueton. August. cap. 97.

Gothi procures suos. Non pueros homines sed semideos, id est *ANSES* vocaverunt. Jornand. Goth.

Z

rected

rected the operations of their respective portions of matter. To these intelligences they gave the name of AISE, or *shadowy ghosts*, expressive of the vast disproportion between them and that Being who was the source from which these spirits themselves, as well as every thing possessed of life and motion, derived their existence. It is, upon the whole, highly probable, that the rites which some of the ancients took for sacrifices to subordinate Divinities among the Celtæ, were no other than ceremonies used by those Barbarians for the purpose of their pretended divinations and enchantments.

I M M O R T A L I T Y

O F T H E

S O U L.

General Reflections.

TH E doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul is not The doctrine not coeval with man. coeval with man. Whole nations have come down into the region of true history without having placed a tenet so essential to religion in their faith. The infancy of society is not favourable to speculative inquiry. Mankind, in their rudest state, scarce ever extend their ideas beyond objects of sense. They perceive, when death suspends the functions of the body, that the man ceases to act and to feel; and the subsequent dissolution of his whole frame establishes the supposition, that his being is at an end. Nature herself confirms the opinion from every quarter by symptoms of decay. The oak that has fallen by accident or age resumes not its place on the mountain; and the flower that withers in autumn revives not with the returning year.

Unknown
in the first
stage of so-
ciety.

Philosophy only begins where the first stage of society ends. As long as bodily labour is the only means of acquiring the necessaries of life, man has neither time or inclination to cultivate the mind. Speculative inquiry is the first fruits of the leisure which civil life procures for individuals; but it is extremely doubtful whether the Immortality of the Soul is among the first truths which philosophers have rescued from ignorance and barbarity.

Æra of its
being first
broached in
Greece.

The most polished nation of antiquity was late in its reception of the doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul. The Greeks, till the days of Thales*, had formed no idea at all concerning a future state. It is even likely that Thales himself, who was the first dignified with the title of Wise†, came too early into the world for the commencement of that opinion. Pherecydes of Scyros‡, according to the best authority, first introduced the doctrine about the fifty-fifth olympiad; and his disciple Pythagoras greatly contributed to confirm the belief of another state by the reputation of his philosophy||. It is however

* Thales PRIMUS dixit animas esse immortales. Chærilus Poeta.

† Primus nomine Sapientis ornatus. Suidas.

‡ Pherecydes Scyros primus dixit animos hominum esse sempiternos. Cic. Tusc.

|| Hanc opinionem Pythagoras ejus (scilicet Pherecydis) discipulus maximè confirmavit. Cic. Tusc. Quæst. lib. i.

Πυθαγόρας

however certain, that few of the Greeks gave into the opinion of Pythagoras and his master; for Pausanias § insinuates, that even in the days of Plato only some of the Greeks believed that the Soul of Man was Immortal.

The Immortality of the Soul was, upon the whole, ^{Merely speculative} a doctrine merely speculative among the ancient Greeks. Their Poets held it forth in their compositions; their philosophers inculcated it upon their disciples; it was a theme of disputation in the schools; but the bulk of the people did not look upon it as a truth necessary to religion: and it is even a matter of doubt whether those philosophers who affirm that virtue must be loved on its own account, did not, in that instance, forget what they had advanced in other places concerning the rewards which await the good in another life.

This scepticism of the Greeks in so essential a point of ^{among the ancient} religion may appear strange, to men who have not examined into the origin of that illustrious nation. The new people who chased the Pelasgi † from Peloponnesus

Πυθαγορας ὁ Σάμιος, και τινες ἑτεροι τῶν παλαιῶν φυσικῶν ἀπεφῆναντο τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὑπάρχειν ἀθάνατους. Diod. Sicul. lib. xviii.

§ Pausan. Messeniac. xxxii.

† See the State of Ancient Europe at the beginning of the Introduction.

and the Islands of the Archipelago, came from the coast of Phœnicia and the mouths of the Nile. They carried into Greece the Gods of Syria and of Egypt, but they could not carry along with them a doctrine which was not received in those countries at the time of their migration. It is a matter of great doubt with many, whether the Jews themselves admitted, in an early period, the Immortality of the Soul among the articles of their faith. This much is certain, that their lawgiver and prophets, if they speak at all, speak very obscurely, as well as undecisively, upon the subject †.

Opinions of the Celtæ on that Subject.

Philosophy

The Greeks and Romans affected to degrade, with the name of Barbarians, all the nations beyond the pale of their own respective dominions. The luxurious Persian, in the midst of the pomp and grandeur of the East, was not free from the ignominy of this injurious appellation, no more than the Scythian in the wild forests of the West. We have however some reason to conclude, that, in an early æra, there was little foundation in fact for the distinction which Greece and Rome made between themselves and the rest of the world. The superiority of the Persians in the arts of civil life was manifest and acknowledged; and philosophy itself took its rise among

† Bishop of Gloucester's Divine Legation of Moses.

those whom the polished nations of antiquity distinguished by the name of Barbarians ||.

We discover by the first dawn of history which rose ^{rose first among the northern nations.} on the northern nations, that, though they had not made any considerable progress in the arts of civil life, they had turned their attention to philosophical inquiry*. An order of men separated from the body of the people by the sacredness of their character, had extended their speculations to the Being and Attributes of a God. We have, in a preceding section, seen that the primary ideas of the Druids concerning the Divinity were the same with those of the ancient Brahmins of the East; “that God is the GREAT SOUL, who animates the whole body of nature †.”

|| Philosophiam a Barbaris initium sumsisse asserunt. Diog. Laert.

* Philosophia olim floruit apud Barbaros, per gentes resplendens. Postea autem etiam venit ad Græcos. Ei autem profuerunt Gallorum Druidæ. Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. i. Eam spem quæ est post mortem, non solum persequuntur qui *barbaram philosophiam* agnoscunt, &c. Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. iv. *Celtarum* ii qui *philosophati* sunt. Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. i.

† Pirrum Attima, or the GREAT SOUL, who is immaterial, one, indivisible, eternal, and indivisible, possessing omniscience, rest, will, and power. Dow's Dissert. on the religion of the Indians.—It is a fundamental article in the Hindoo faith, that God is the Soul of the world—and is consequently diffused through all nature. Dow's Dissert. &c. —Conditor et administrator mundi deus universum eum pervadit. Strabo, lib. xv.

The

The Druids taught the Immortality of the Soul.

The Druids, from the elevated inquiry into the existence of the GREAT SOUL, descended into an examination of the nature and permanency of that active principle which animates the human body. In their researches upon this subject they departed from the opinion of the ancient Brahmins, who supposed that the soul of man was a portion of that irresistible principle which pervades and moves the immense body of the Universe ‡. The ideas of the Druids concerning God were certainly the same with those of the eastern philosophers; but they placed in the human frame a distinct intelligence capable of happiness, and subject to misery. The Immortality of the Soul was the first

‡ This was the opinion of the emperor Julian, who probably borrowed it from the Gauls, among whom he resided for many years. — Julianus nocte dimidiata exurgens occulte Mercurio supplicabat, quem mundi velociorem sensum esse, motum mentium suscitantem Theologicæ prodidere doctrinæ. Amm. Marcell. lib. xvi. — Qui universam mundi naturam amplectitur. Dionys. Halic. lib. i. — Deus est animus per naturam rerum omnem intentus et commeans, ex quo nostri animi carperentur. Cic. de Nat. Deor. lib. i. — Deus est animus per universam rerum naturam commeans et intentus, ex quo etiam animalium omnium vita capiatur. Min. Felix, c. 19. — Animus per omnes mundi partes commeans et diffusus, ex quo omnia quæ nascuntur animalia vitam capiunt. Salv. de Provid. lib. i. — Definiverunt quod esset Deus, animus per universas mundi partes, omnemque naturam commeans atque diffusus, ex quo omnia quæ nascuntur vitam capiunt. Lactan. Instit. lib. i.

principle

principle of their faith †, and the great hinge upon which the religion of the ancient British, as well as of the other branches of the Celtic stock, originally turned. Upon this doctrine, which was with eagerness inculcated by the Druids, was founded those characteristical manners which distinguished the northern Celtæ from the polished nations of antiquity.

In the infancy of philosophy it is difficult for the human mind to form any distinct idea of the existence of an immaterial Being. We are not, therefore, to wonder that the northern nations carried the business and pastimes, though not the miseries, of this life into their future state. Without being acquainted with the PALINGENESIA of Pythagoras* and his followers, they

Their opinions concerning a future state,

† Unum ex iis quæ præcipiunt in vulgus effluit eternas esse animas, vitamque alteram ad manes. Pomp. Mela, lib. iii.—Επισχύνει γαρ παρ' αὐτοῖς ὁ Πυθαγόρου λόγος, ὅτι τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀθανάτους εἶναι συμβέβηκε. Diod. Sic. lib. v.—Immortales autem dicunt hi (Druidæ) animos esse. Strabo, lib. iv.—Inter hos Druidæ ingeniis celsiores despectantes humana, pronuntiarunt animas immortales. Amm. Marcell. lib. xv.—Unum illud insitum erat priscis illis quos Cascos appellat (illi enim de Celtis fuere) Ennius, esse in morte sensum neque excessu vitæ sic deleri hominem. Cicer. Tusc. Quæst. lib. i.—Imprimis hoc volunt persuadere, non interire animas. Cæsar, l. vi. c. 14.

* Pythagoras non μετεμψύχωσιν sed παλινγενεσίαν esse dicit, hoc est redire, sed post tempus. Serv. ad Æneid. iii.—Sententia de παλινγενεσίᾳ antiqua est. Primus dogma proposuit Pythagoras. Auct. Vet.

A a

clothed.

clothed departed spirits with bodies not subject to decay ; and they were singular in the opinion, that the soul left all unhappiness behind it when it took its flight from this world.

which was
free from
misery,

But though the future state of the ancient Britons was distinguished by a total absence of misery, its pleasures were of different degrees. The hero and soldier who died in war enjoyed a more elevated felicity ; but the peaceable and unwarlike were not, as among the Scandinavians, precipitated into a state of absolute misery. Such was the ignorance of the Celtæ of what we call Hell, that they had no name for any such place in their language. This circumstance divested Death of all his terrors ; and to it we ought to ascribe the unparalleled valour of the Celtic nations †.

and full of
felicity.

The pleasing prospect which a future state presented to our ancestors, rendered, by its contrast, the present life very miserable in their eyes. They wept over the birth of their children * as entering into a scene of misfortunes,

† Παρ' ἧδὲν τιθέμενοι τον του βίου τηλευτην. Diod. Sic. lib. v.—
Θανάτου καλαφρονήαι δὲ ἐλπίδα αναβιώσεως. Appian. de antiquis Germanis.

* Lugentur apud quosdam puerperia, natiq̃ue deflentur. Pomp. Mela, l. ii.—Natales hominum flebiliter, exequias cum hilaritate celebrant. Val. Max. lib. ii.—Apud plurimos luctuosa sunt puerperia, denique

fortunes, and they accompanied their dead with joy to the grave, as having changed a state of unhappiness for one of perfect felicity. Peculiarly fortunate in their error, if the opinion deserves so harsh a name, they converted into means of joy what other systems of religion have rendered gloomy and melancholy. Death, with them, was the dark point which separated a life short and miserable, from a long and happy immortality in another world ‡.

The Paradise of the ancient British Nations.

The ancient inhabitants of Britain, to enjoy the felicity of a future state, ascended not into heaven with the The Paradise of the Celtæ

denique recentem natum fletu accipit. Controversum læta sunt funera, adeo ut exemptos gaudio prosequantur. Solin. xv.

Τὸν μὲν γινόμενον περιζόμενοι οἱ προσήκοντες ὀλοφύρονται, ὅσα μιν δεῖ, ἐπεὶ τε ἐγένετο, ἀναπλῆσαι κακὰ ἀνοιγεόμενοι τὰ ἀνθρωπῆϊα πάντα πάθεα· τὸν δ' ἀπογινόμενον, παίζοντες τε καὶ ἠδόμενοι, γῇ καλύπτουσι, ἐπιλέγοντες ὅσων κακῶν ἔξαπαλλαχθεὶς, ἔστι ἐν πάσῃ εὐδαιμονίῃ. Herodot. lib. v.

‡ Vobis auctoribus, umbræ,
Non tacitas Erebi fedes, Ditisque profundi
Pallida regna petunt; regit idem spiritus artus.
Orbe alio: longæ (canitis si cognita) vitæ
Mors media est. Certe populi, quos despicit Arctos,
Felices erorre suo, quos ille timorum,
Maximus haud urget leti metus. Inde ruendi
In ferrum mens prona viris animæque capaces
Mortis.

Lucan. lib. ii.

Christians, nor dived under the ocean with the poets of Greece and Rome. Their FLATH-INNIS, or NOBLE ISLAND *, lay, surrounded with tempest, in the Western ocean †. Their brethren on the continent, in an early period, placed the seats of the Blessed in Britain; but the Britons themselves, as we shall have occasion to shew, removed their Fortunate Island very far to the west of their own country.

different
from that of
the North.

The ancients are extremely imperfect in their accounts of the pleasures which the Celtæ enjoyed in their future state; neither does the Islandic Edda, now in the hands of the learned, supply that defect. The nations to the North and East of the Baltic were a very different race of men from the more ancient inhabitants of the rest of Europe. It was after the tyranny and civilization of the Romans had broken the spirit, and destroyed the virtues of the Celtæ, that the Sarmatic Tartars of the East and North advanced into the South, and established their opinions in the regions which they subdued. It is therefore in vain to trace the speculative ideas of the ancient Britons, concerning their NOBLE ISLAND, in the legends of Odin's Hall.

* Flath-innis, or *noble-Island*, is the only name in the Gaëlic language for the Heaven of the Christians. The appellation speaks for itself.

† Beatorum insulæ dicuntur esse in occidentali oceano. Eustath. ad Dion. Perieg.

On this subject we must derive our intelligence from ^{A Galic Tale.} a domestic source. The Scottish bards, with their compositions in verse, conveyed to posterity some poetical romances in prose. One of those tales, which tradition has brought down to our times, relates to the Paradise of the Celtic nations. The following extract will contribute to illustrate the detached informations which the writers of Greece and Rome have transmitted from antiquity, concerning the Fortunate Islands.

“ In former days,” says the bard, “ there lived in SKERR * a magician of high renown †. The blast of wind waited for his commands at the gate; he rode the tempest, and the troubled wave offered itself as a pillow for his repose. His eye followed the sun by day; his thoughts travelled from star to star in the season of night ‡. He thirsted after things unseen. He sighed

* *Skerr* signifies in general a rock in the ocean.

† A magician is called DRUIDH in the Gaëlic language. This word is the original of the Druidæ of the ancients. It seems to be a primitive, though some have traced its etymon in *Dru*, or rather *Daru*, an Oak.

‡ Φιλόσοφοι τὲ τινες εἰσὶ καὶ θεολόγοι περιτῶς τιμώμενοι, οὓς Δρουΐδας ονομαζουσι. Diod. Sic. lib. v.—*Multa præterea de sideribus, atque eorum motu, de mundi ac terrarum magnitudine, de rerum natura, de Deorum immortalium vi atque potestate disputant. Cæsar, l. vi.—Inter hos Druidæ ingeniis celsiores, questionibus occultarum rerum altarumque erecti, et despectantes humana. Ammian. Marcellin. lib. xv.—Hi terræ mundique magnitudinem et formam, motus cæli ac siderum ac quid Dii velint, scire profitentur. Pomp. Mela, lib. iii.*

over

over the narrow circle which furrounded his days. He often sat in silence beneath the sound of his groves; and he blamed the careless billows that rolled between him and the *green Isle of the West* ||.

“ One day, as the magician of SKERR sat thoughtful upon a rock, a storm arose on the sea: A cloud, under whose squally skirts the foaming waters complained, rushed suddenly into the bay; and from its dark womb at once issued forth a boat with its white sails bent to the wind, and hung round with a hundred moving oars: But it was destitute of mariners; itself seeming to live and move. An unusual terror seized the aged magician: He heard a voice though he saw no human form. “ Arise, “ behold the boat of the heroes—arise, and see the “ green Isle of those who have passed away §.”

“ He felt a strange force on his limbs: he saw no person; but he moved to the boat. The wind immediately changed. In the bosom of the cloud he sailed away. Seven days gleamed faintly round him; seven nights added their gloom to his darkness. His ears were stunned with shrill voices. The dull murmur of winds passed him on either side. He slept not; but his eyes were not heavy: he ate not, but he was not hungry. On

|| Celebratæ illæ beatorum insulæ dicuntur esse in occidentali oceano. Eustath. ad Dion. Perieg.

§ Vid. Plutarch. de Orac. Defect.

the eighth day the waves swelled into mountains; the boat was rocked violently from side to side. The darkness thickened around him, when a thousand voices at once cried aloud, "The Isle, the Isle." The billows opened wide before him; the calm land of the departed rushed in light on his eyes*.

"It was not a light that dazzled, but a pure, distinguishing, and placid light, which called forth every object to view in their most perfect form. The Isle spread large before him like a pleasing dream of the soul; where distance fades not on the sight; where nearness fatigues not the eye. It had its gently-sloping hills of green; nor did they wholly want their clouds: But the clouds were bright and transparent; and each involved in its bosom the source of a stream; a beauteous stream, which, wandering down the steep, was like the faint notes of the half-touched harp to the distant ear. The valleys were open, and free to the ocean; trees loaded with leaves, which scarcely waved to the light breeze, were scattered on the green declivities and rising grounds.

* There is a great similarity between this passage and the romantic description given by Procopius of those whose office it was to transport departed souls to the Celtic Paradise.—Narrant indignæ, se id habere munus, ut in orbem, sua quisque vice, deducunt animas. Hi, primis tenebris dant se somno, rei præsidem expectantes. Intempesta nocte pulsari fores, seque ad opus, obscura voce, acciri audiunt. Ad littus extemplo vadunt, ignari qua vi impellantur sed tamen coacti. Paratas ibi Scaphas vident, hominibus penitus vacuas, &c. Procop. Goth. lib. iv.

The

The rude winds walked not on the mountain ; no storm took its course through the sky. All was calm and bright ; the pure sun of autumn shone from his blue sky on the fields. He hastened not to the West for repose ; nor was he seen to rise from the East. He sits in his mid-day height, and looks obliquely on the Noble Isle.

“ In each valley is its slow-moving stream. The pure waters swell over the banks, yet abstain from the fields. The showers disturb them not ; nor are they lessened by the heat of the sun. On the rising hill are the halls of the departed—the high-roofed dwellings of the heroes of old. ”

General
remarks.

Thus far is the Tale worthy of translation. Incoherent fables succeed the description ; and the employments of the Blessed in their Fortunate Island differ, in no respect, from the amusements of the most uncultivated inhabitants of a mountainous country. The bodies with which the bard clothes his departed heroes have more grace, and are more active, than those they left behind them in this world ; and he describes with peculiar elegance the beauty of the women. After a very transient vision of the NOBLE ISLE, the magician of Skerr returned home in the same miraculous manner in which he had been carried across the ocean. But though in his own mind he comprehended his absence
in

in sixteen days, he found every thing changed at his return. No trace of his habitation remained; he knew not the face of any man. He was even forced, says the Tale, to make inquiry concerning himself; and tradition had scarcely carried down his name to the generation who then possessed the Island of SKERR. Two complete centuries had passed away since his departure; so imperceptible was the flight of time in the felicity of the Celtic Paradise.

The departed, according to the Tale, retained in the midst of their happiness a warm affection for their country and living friends. They sometimes visited the first; and by the latter, as the bard expresses it, they were transiently seen in the hour of peril, and especially on the near approach of death. It was then that at midnight the death-devoted, to use the words of the Tale, were suddenly awakened by a strange knocking at their gates; it was then that they heard the undistinct voice of their departed friends calling them away to the Noble Isle *.—“A sudden joy,” continues the Author of the Tale, “rushed in upon their minds; and that pleasing melancholy, which looks forward to happiness in a distant land.” It is worthy of being remarked, that, though those who died a natural death were not excluded from the Celtic Paradise, the

The souls of
the departed
visited at
times this
world.

* Intempesta nocte pulsari fores, seque, obscura voce, acciri audiunt.
Procop. Goth. lib. iv.

more pleasant divisions of the FLATH-INNIS, or NOBLE ISLE, were assigned to men who fell in war.

Cause of the
contempt of
death among
our ances-
tors.

The animated descriptions which the Druids and Bards gave of FLATH-INNIS, or the NOBLE ISLE, rendered the Celtic nations careless about a transitory life which must terminate in happiness*. They threw away with indifference the burden when it galled them, and became in some measure independent of fortune in her worst extreme. They met death in the field with elevation and joy of mind†; they fought after him with eagerness when oppressed with disease, or worn out with age‡. To the same cause, and not to a want of docility of disposition and temper, we ought to ascribe their small progress in the arts of civil life before the Phœnicians and Greeks, with their commerce, and the Romans, with their arms, introduced a taste for luxury into the regions of the West and North.

* Germani mortem contemnunt quia credunt se revicturos. Appian. Celt.—Germani contemptu mortis cæteris validiores. Hegefipp. lib. ii.—Getæ cum se non mori, sed aliò migrare existiment, multo paratiores ad fubeunda pericula. Julian. Cæsar de Trajano.

† Cimbri in acie exultabant, tanquam gloriose et feliciter vita excessuri. Valer. Max. lib. ii.

‡ Nec senibus nec ægrotis fas erat vitam producere. Procop. lib. iii.

Prodiga gens animæ

Impatiens ævi spernit novissæ senectam,

Et fati modus in dextra est.

Silius Italic. lib. i.

Consummatamque senectam

Non ferro finire pudet.

Sidon. Apoll. v. 43.

C H A R A C T E R,
M A N N E R S, A N D C U S T O M S
O F T H E
A N C I E N T B R I T I S H N A T I O N S.

Their Character.

THE principles of reason are so unchangeable in themselves, that were men to form their actions upon them there would be little diversity in the character of nations. The speculative opinions of the Brahmin on the banks of the Ganges differed not materially from those of the Druid on the Rhine; but there was no similitude between the ignorant Indian and the illiterate German. The bulk of mankind deliver themselves over to the direction of their passions; climate, constitution of body, mode of education, manner of life, and a thousand circumstances of less importance than these, give rise to those peculiarities which distinguish individuals from one another, and diversify the characters of nations. Without this variety, history would languish in the sameness of events; for the motives which produce human actions furnish more amusement in narration than the actions themselves.

Cause of variety in the characters of nations.

The Ancient British
passionate and
impetuous,

warlike,

plain, good-
hearted,
upright,

The Ancient British Nations, like their Celtic brethren on the continent, were fierce, passionate, and impetuous; sudden in resolution, sanguine in expectation, impatient under disappointment. This warmth and vehemence of temper proceeded, according to the ancients, from the full habit of their bodies, and the abundance of their blood *; and these circumstances naturally led to a careless boldness, which threw disgrace on their conduct, when it displayed their courage. War, which was their chief business, was their great amusement. They were in love † with slaughter, and, as Cæsar observes, born as it were in the midst of battle and depredation ‡. Public tranquillity by no means suited their disposition; they seemed to be of the same opinion with the king of Thrace, who said, that he appeared to himself no better than his groom when he was not engaged in war.

With all this violence and fierceness of disposition, they were in private life plain and upright in their dealings, and far removed from the deceit and duplicity of modern times §. They were always open,

* Septentrionales populi largo sanguine redundantur. Veget. i.—
Sub septentrionibus nutriuntur gentes largo sanguine. Vitruv. vi.

† Εἰσι δὲ μαχιμώτατοί τε καὶ φονικώτατοι. Herodian. lib. iii.

‡ In bello latrociniiisque nati. Cæsar, lib. vi.

§ Τοῖς δὲ ἤθεσιν ἀπλοῦς εἶναι, καὶ πολὺ κεχωρισμένους τῆς τῶν νῦν ἀνθρώπων ἀγχινοίας καὶ πονηρίας. Diod. Sic. lib. v.

sincere,

sincere, and undisguised; simple, good-natured, and void of malignity*; and though cruel, and sometimes barbarous, to their enemies, they were kind and compassionate to the suppliant and unfortunate†. Fickle-fickle, ness and levity were the natural consequences of their warmth of disposition. Men of vivacity, and subject to passion, are, for the most part, inconstant, changeable, rash, curious, credulous, and proud. All the branches of the Celtic nation determined suddenly upon precipitate, affairs of the greatest moment, and placed the foundation of resolutions of the last importance upon uncertain rumours, and vague reports‡. Their violence in rushing into new projects could be only equalled by their want of perseverance in any plan. The tide seldom ran long in one direction; it was always with them a precipitate ebb, or a tempestuous flow.

The curiosity which so remarkably distinguished the curious, ancient Gauls has come down with their posterity to the present times. The Highlanders of North Britain are so fond of news, that even the poorest labourers,

* Galli homines aperti, minimèque infidiosi, qui per virtutem, non per dolum dimicare consueverunt. Cæsar de Bello Afric.—Ταχὺ πρὸς μάχην ἄλλως δὲ ἀπλοὴν καὶ οὐ κακότητες. Strabo, lib. iii.

† Hospitibus boni mitesque supplicibus. Pomp. Mela, lib. iii.

‡ Rumoribus atque auditionibus permoti, de summis sæpe rebus consilia ineunt. Cæsar, lib. iv.

upon seeing at a great distance a traveller on the road, often quit their work, run to meet him, and, with great earnestness, intreat him to tell them something concerning the state of public affairs. If he is communicative they accompany him perhaps for many miles, and they seem to think themselves well recompensed for the time they have lost by the intelligence which they have received *.

hospitable, Our ancestors were hospitable beyond example. To receive the stranger with cheerfulness, to lodge him in their best apartments, to treat him with their greatest delicacies, was a law which custom had rendered inviolable and universal †. It was not till after he signified his desire of pursuing his journey that they inquired about his country and his name ‡; and they excused this piece of curiosity in themselves by saying, that they were anxious to know some few particulars concerning a person who had so much honoured their habitation with his presence. When they saw a traveller upon the

* Est autem hoc Gallicæ consuetudinis, ut et viatores, etiam invitos, consistere cogant, et quod quisque eorum de quaqua re audierit aut cognoverit, quærant. Cæsar, lib. iv.

† Mortalium omnium erga hospites humanissimi. Procop. de Ædif. lib. iii.

‡ Καλῶσι δὲ καὶ τοῦς ξένοῦς ἐπὶ τὰς εὐωχίας καὶ μετὰ τὸ δεῖπνον ἐπερωτῶσι τίνες εἰσὶ, καὶ τίνων ἔχουσιν. Diod. Sic. v.

road

road they ran to meet him, and, with an earnestness that bordered on compulsion, invited him to their houses; and there was often a kind of jealousy and contention between neighbours about the honour of being the first who should entertain the stranger. The decision in these disputes was left to the traveller; and the disappointed person used to say, that God was favourable to him who had the good fortune to be preferred*. At night they never shut their gates†, “lest the traveller, say they, should come and be disappointed, when we are asleep, and not ready to invite or receive him‡.”

The haughtiness, self-conceit, and national pride which the ancients found among the Celtæ||, was not peculiar to that race of men. The vulgar of every country have a high opinion of their own nation. National pride is, at the worst, an useful weakness; for men who think meanly of themselves are seldom capable of great

proud, and
haughty.

* Τοῖς δ' ἤθεσι πρὸς μὲν τοὺς κακοῦργους καὶ πολεμίους ὑπάρχουσιν ὤμοι, πρὸς δὲ τοὺς ξένοὺς ἐπιεικεῖς καὶ φιλόανθρωποι. Τοὺς γὰρ ἐπιδημήσαντας ξενόους ἅπαντας ἀξιοῦσι παρ' αὐτοῖς ποιεῖσθαι τὰς καταλύσεις καὶ πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἀμιλλώνται περὶ ξενίας, οἷς δ' ἂν οἱ ξένοι συνακολουθήσωσι, τοὺς τοῦτους ἐπαινοῦσι καὶ θεοφιλεῖς ἡγῶνται. Diod. Sic. lib. v.

† Celtæ januas ædium nunquam claudunt. Agath. lib. i.

‡ Hospites violare, fas non putant, qui quæqua de causâ ad eos venerunt, ab injuria prohibent, sanctosque habent; iis omnium domus patent, victusque communicatur. Cæsar, lib. vi.

|| Celtæ magna de seipsis sentiunt. Arrian. Exped. Alex.

actions.

actions.—These are the most striking outlines of the character of the ancient inhabitants of Britain. To any man acquainted with the nature and genius of the unmixed part of the posterity of the Celtæ, in the northern division of the Island, the authorities at the bottom of the page are superfluous. He will be convinced of the justness of the description, by the observations he himself has made; and he will be, at the same time, surprised to see the accurate exactness, with which the writers of Rome have drawn the portrait of our ancestors.

Their Amusements and Diversions.

Amuse-
ments of the
ancient Bri-
tons

The British branch of the Celtæ, like the great stock from which they sprung, were, almost in every thing, on the extreme. They placed their chief happiness in the most perfect inactivity, or in the most violent exertions of the body. Wedded to the strange opinion, that all labour, whether of body or mind, was mean and disgraceful, they dedicated the whole time that remained to them from war and the chase, to sleep, and a very few domestic diversions*.

consisted in
feasts

To feast together, and to regale themselves, held the first place in their amusements. Every slight occurrence was seized upon with eagerness, as an excuse for conviviality and

* Plus per otium transigunt, dediti somno. Tacit. Germ. lib. xv.

public

public entertainment. Without the banquet nothing important was ever done. The feast was, as it were, the seal which gave validity to public conventions, the sanction which rendered inviolable private friendships. The name-day of every person in a family was kept, marriages were celebrated with uncommon festivity, and funerals solemnized with lavish hospitality. The love of a reputation for hospitality was carried so far, that the great men in the community often pitched tents and built huts on the public road, for the pleasure of entertaining indiscriminately all those who passed that way †. These entertainments have been known to last a whole year; and the hospitable chief, not content with giving a general invitation to all the members of the state, placed parties of men on the by-roads of the country, to bring passengers, by a kind of compulsion, to his table.

The dishes at those feasts were not numerous, and ^{and public} there was little variety in the cookery. Fish of various kinds, the flesh of tame animals, wild fowl, and venison, were served up, as at present, in the three modes of boiled, broiled, and roasted ‡. They abstained from tame fowl: Geese, ducks, and hens they only reared

† Athenæus, lib. iv.

‡ Ἡ τροφή ἐστὶ ἄρτοι μὲν ὀλίγοι, κρέα δὲ πολλὰ ἐν ὕδατι καὶ ὀπτά ἐπ' ἀνθρώπων, ἢ ὀβελίσκων. Posidonius apud Athenæum. Πλησίον δ' αὐτῶν ἐσχάται κύναι, γέμουσαι πυρὸς καὶ λέβητας ἔχουσιν, &c. Diod. Sic. lib. v.

for pleasure §. The utensils used upon these occasions were few in number and simple in their fashion. Spits and large earthen pots were the whole furniture of the kitchen; wooden, and sometimes earthen and pewter platters *, that of the table. The guests, as to this day in France, brought along with them their own knives and forks, which hung from the girdle in the same sheath † with the dagger, which is called the *Bidoc* by the ancient Scots.

entertain-
ments.

The side-tables of the old Britons were not decorated with all the splendour of modern times. On them were only to be seen drinking cups of various sizes, and in number equal to those who sat at table. One of the cups was generally of silver, the rest of wood, horn ||, earth, and sometimes of shell. The better sort sat at a table in the center of the great hall. Their dependents, completely armed, as if on guard, formed a wider circle,

§ *Cæsar*, lib. v.

* Το δὲ ποτὸν οἱ διακονοῦντες ἐν αγγείοις περιφέρουσιν, εἰκόσι μὲν ἀμ-
βίκοις, ἢ κεραμενέοις, ἢ ἀργυροῖς. Καὶ γὰρ τοῦς πίνακας, ἐφ' ὧν τὰς τροφὰς
προτίθενται, τοιοῦτους ἔχουσιν· οἱ δὲ χαλκοῦς, οἱ δὲ κᾶνεα ξύλινα καὶ πλεκ-
τά. *Posidon. apud Athen.*

† Μαχωρίῳ μικρῷ παρατίμνουσιν, ὃ τοῖς κολεοῖς ἐν ἰδία θήκῃ παράκειται.
Idem apud eundem.

|| *Cornibus barbari septentrionales potant. Plin. lib. xi. Cornua ab
labris argento circumcludunt. Cæsar, lib. vi.*

and

and regaled themselves, at the same time‡, on long benches very little raised from the ground. They were waited upon at table by girls and boys not arrived at the years of puberty§. When they had done eating, the most honourable man at the feast called for a cup of ale, the common drink of the Celtæ, or of wine, after commerce had introduced it among them. He drank, as we do at present, to the next on his right hand; and the same cup being filled to the brim to each person, went round the whole circle. The women were* not only admitted but highly honoured at their entertainments; they retired, as with us, before the men proceeded to downright ebriety.

The bards held a conspicuous place at public enter- Of singing, tainments; and a great part of the amusement of our ancestors was derived from their songs. They repeated their compositions in every branch of poetry; the heroic, the elegiac, the ludicrous, the severe. The words were set to music; the bard recited nothing where the voice was not sustained by some instrument. The harp was

‡ Καὶ οἱ μὲν τοῦς θυρεοῦς ὀπλοφρουροῦντες ἐκ τῶν ὀπίσω παρεστῶσιν· οἱ δὲ δορυφόροι κατὰ τὴν ἀντικρὺ καθημενοὶ κύκλῳ, καθάπερ οἱ δεσπότες συνευωχοῦνται. Pofid. ubi supra.

§ Διακονοῦνται ὑπὸ τῶν νεωτάτων παίδων, οὐκ ἔχόντων ἡλικίαν ἀρρένων τε καὶ θηλειῶν. Diod. Sic. lib. v.

* Ductæ in eos conventus auxores. Athen. lib. x.

appropriated to the serious ; a flute or pipe accompanied the comic and lively.

dancing,

That species of dancing which the Greeks distinguished by the name of Pyrrhic, was an universal amusement among the Celtic nations. A number of young men in complete armour rushed in suddenly before the guests, at a certain period of the warlike music, danced with great agility, and kept time by striking their swords against their shields †. When the spectators were, for a short time, amused with this shew, the music suddenly changed, the armed dancers disappeared with a shout of war, and a band of young women entered, tripping hand in hand to a merry air ‖. They too, at a certain period of the music, vanished at once ; the young men entered again as if engaged in action, and to the sound of the accompanying instrument exhibited all the incidents of a real battle *.

duelling,

Neither were the guests at Celtic entertainments gratified with fictitious battles only ; the young warriors frequently challenged one another to single combat to shew their bravery. The gladiatorial spectacles at Rome proceeded from this characteristical custom of the Barba-

† Xenophon. Exped. Cyr. lib. vi.

‖ Mulieres etiam saltant, una alteram manu tenentes. Strabo, lib. iii.

* Xenophon, Exped. Cyr. lib. vi.

rians of the North of Europe; who, contrary to the opinions of all other nations, placed death itself in the number of their amusements*. This peculiarity they carried to such an extravagant pitch, that a stranger, if renowned for his valour, thought himself dishonoured should his host neglect to give him an opportunity of breaking a spear with some brave man among his friends.

The eagerness for games of chance, which Tacitus ^{games of chance.} found among the Germans, was not entirely confined to the continent. The ancient Bards have transmitted to us, in their songs, many proofs that dice were not unknown among the Caledonians. The Bards, however, do not inform us that the northern Britons carried their passion for gaming so far as to place their liberty, which was more valuable than life itself in the eyes of the Celtæ, upon a single throw of the dye †.

* Mortem pro joco habent. Athen. lib. iv.

† Extremo ac novissimo jactu, de libertate et de corpore contendunt. Tacit. Germ. lib. xxiv.

Their Morality and Poetry.

General
reflections.

Vice is not natural to man ; he derives it from those fictitious wants which grow with the progress of society. Before property becomes the means of procuring sensual pleasure, civil restraints are superfluous, and morality itself an unnecessary study. The contempt which the Celtic nations shewed for death, is a proof that they were not anxious about the possession of the conveniences of life ; and that circumstance shut up the great channel of corruption which pollutes the human mind in an advanced stage of civility. We may here without impropriety observe, that the vices of Barbarians proceed from prejudice, and their virtues from nature.

Morality
taught by
the Druids,

The Druids, with their speculative opinions on religion, inculcated upon their followers some general maxims of morality. The result of their inquiries in other branches of philosophy, their discoveries in the nature and properties of matter, they confined to themselves, to astonish into a veneration for their order a race of men whom they wished to govern through the channel of prejudice and ignorance. Darkness was favourable to the continuance of their power ; and they encouraged into a settled contempt that dislike to science

science and the arts of civil life which the northern nations derived from their natural aversion to mental, as well as to bodily labour.

The moral character of our ancestors owed more and Bards, to the compositions of the Bard * than to the precepts of the Druid. That elevation of soul which the first inspired was more favourable to virtue than the cold dictates of the latter; for the mind which entertains a conscious and dignified pride seldom harbours vice. The influence which the Bards derived from the instruction and amusement with which their poems furnished their countrymen, raised them to equal honours with the Druids themselves. The respect for their order was so great and universal, that armies engaged in action have been known to desist from battle when the Bards threw themselves between the lines †. They were held in as much veneration by the enemies of their nation as by their countrymen and friends; “for” as

* *Viguere studia laudabilium doctrinarum inchoata per Bardos, Amm. Marcell. lib. xv.*

† “Ου μόνον δ' ἐν ταῖς εἰρηνικαῖς χρεαίαις, ἀλλὰ καὶ κατὰ τοὺς πολέμους τοῦτοις μάλιστα πείθονται, καὶ τοῖς μελωδοῦσι ποιηταῖς, οὐ μόνον οἱ φίλοι, ἀλλὰ καὶ οἱ πολεμιοὶ· πολλάκις δ' ἐν ταῖς παρατάξεσι πλησιαζόντων, ἀλλήλοις τῶν στρατοπέδων καὶ τοῖς ξίφεσιν ἀνατεταμένους καὶ ταῖς λόγχαις προβεβλημένους, εἰς τὸ μέσον οὗτοι προελθόντες παύουσιν αὐτοὺς, ὥσπερ τινα θηρία καλεπᾶσαντες. *Diod. Sic. lib. v.* .

an ancient Bard expresses himself, "the world is the
"country, and mankind the relations of every genuine
"Poet."

who were
divided into
three classes.

The compositions of the Bards, according to the
ancients, comprehended the religion, the laws, and
history of the Celtic nations. To commit those poems
to memory, to repeat them on solemn occasions, was
the great amusement and study of their vacant hours.
It is highly probable, though the observation is not
made by the writers of Greece and Rome, that the
order of the Bards were divided into three different
classes. The British and Irish Scots had their FER-
LAOI, or Hymnists ‡, who reduced the tenets of reli-
gion into verse; their SENACHIES, who comprehended
the fabulous history of their ancestors * in a kind of
unpoetical stanza; and their FER-DÂN, who sung the
praises of men who had made a great figure in war †.
Each of these classes kept its own province entire.
They interfered not in the least with one another; the

‡ 'Οι Βάρδοι ὕμνισαι καὶ ποιηταί. Strabo, lib. iv.

* Celebrabant carminibus antiquis, quod unum apud illos memoriae
et annalium genus est. Tacit. Germ. lib. ii.

† Bardi quidem fortia virorum facta, heroicis composita versibus,
cum dulcibus lyræ modulis cantitarunt. Amm. Marcell. lib. v.

Vos quoque, qui fortes animos belloque peremptos
Laudibus in longum vates dimittitis ævum,
Plurima securi fudistis carmina Bardî.

Lucan. lib. i.

FER-

FER-LAOI descended not into the region of the SENACHY, nor did the SENACHY rise to the sublimity of the FER-DÂN, who derived from his poetical genius his only title to the name of Bard. The hymns of the FER-LAOI were lost by the introduction of a new religion; and the works of the SENACHY expired in their natural dulness. A few of the compositions of the FER-DÂN have triumphed over the ravages of time; and prove that the Bards inculcated the purest morals on their countrymen, and comprehended in their songs all those virtues which render a man truly great, and deservedly renowned.

The ancient British nations heard their poems with such rapture and enthusiasm, that they formed their character and manners upon the model of the virtues which the Bards recommended in their songs. In an age unacquainted with science men became disinterested, generous, and noble, as individuals; as a nation they were inconsiderable and obscure in the absence of those civil improvements which alone can render a community respectable and great. A publication which the Author of the Introduction has already given to the world establishes the justness of the above observation. It at the same time shews, that the personal virtues of individuals avail little to perpetuate the fame of an uncultivated nation; and it also proves, that no dignity of

Character of
the ancient
Britons
formed on
the poems of
the Bards.

character, no greatness of soul, can rescue the prince from the oblivion which must involve his unpolished and illiterate people. Fingal passed away unnoticed in Caledonia, at the time that Heliogabalus employed the page of the historian at Rome.

Subject of
their poems.

To recommend valour in war by the example of ancient times *, to encourage the generous feelings of the mind with panegyric, to animate the living to noble deeds by celebrating the great actions of the dead †, were not the only subjects which employed the genius of the Celtic Bards. They travelled to the various regions of poetry, to the sentimental, the ludicrous, the severe. Of the two latter nothing of any antiquity remains. The ludicrous is local and temporary ; and satire ceases to please when the follies it reprehends are lost in length of time. The sentimental is peculiar to no age ; it suits the inherent feelings of the human mind ; and when clothed with glowing imagery, and expressed in smooth versification, it pleases the fancy, and adheres to the memory. It is to an union of all these circumstances we owe the preservation of the greatest part of the poems of Ossian, which contribute

* Bardi quidem fortia virorum illustrium facta, heroicis composita versibus, cantitarunt. Amm. Marcell. lib. xv.

† Celtæ hymnorum suorum argumentum faciunt, viros qui in præliis fortiter pugnantes occubuerunt. Ælian. Var. Hist. lib. xii.

to finish the picture of our ancestors, of which the outlines have been drawn by the writers of Greece and Rome.

The poets, in short, were the great, the favourite instructors of the ancient Briton. He attended to the precept of the Druid with awe; he heard the sentiment of the Bard with rapture. Reserved, severe, and imperious, the first, when he enlightened, endeavoured to enslave the mind; the latter elevated the soul with pleasure, when he improved it with instruction.

Their Persons, and Women.

The inhabitants of modern Europe differ not more ^{Persons of the Celtæ} in their manners, than in the size of their persons, from those nations who possessed of old the regions of the North and West. The Sarmatic Tartars, who moved into the provinces of the Roman empire upon its decline, were low of stature, a squat and swarthy race of men. The Celtic nations, under whatever climate they were placed, were tall, robust*, and lusty†;

* Sunt Celtæ proceræ staturæ. Arrian. Exped. Alexandr.—
Proceræ stabant Celtorum signa cohortes. Silius Ital.—Οἱ δὲ Κέλται
τοῖς μὲν σώμασιν εἰσὶν εὐμήκεις. Diod. Sic. lib. v.

† Mollia et fluida corpora Gallorum. Tit. Liv. lib. xxxiv.

of a ruddy complexion *, with yellow hair †, and large blue eyes ‡. The Spaniard §, exposed to the burning suns of Gallicia, was as fair and florid as the German of the northern Europe.

of an enormous size.

The ancients, astonished at the enormous size of the Celtæ, endeavoured to account for that phenomenon in a physical way. Cæsar, in speaking of the Germans, attributes their great stature to the gross food with which they were nourished, to the continual exercise which was the natural attendant on the two occupations of hunting and predatory war. The illustrious writer ascribes it in part to the uninterrupted freedom of action they enjoyed in their youth; to the want of all application to study; and to the consequent absence of correction when boys ||. To all these causes combined

* Ταῖς δὲ σαρκὶ κάθυργοι καὶ λευκοί. Diod. Sic. lib. v.—Fusa et candida corpora. Tit. Liv. lib. xxxviii.

† Ταῖς δὲ κόμαις ἐκφύσεως ξανθοί. Diod. Sic. lib. v.—Flavis promissis crinibus. Plin. ii.—Inde truces flavo comitantur vertice Galli. Claudian. in Rufin. lib. ii.

Arcto à de gente comam tibi Lesbia, misi

Ut scires quanta sit tua flava magis. Martial. Epig. v.

‡ Germani truces et cærulei oculi. Tacit. Germ. lib. iv.—Natio vehementer cæsiis oculis. Herodot. lib. iv.

§ Fulgore nivali corporis Hispanus. Silius Ital. lib. xvi.

|| Non multum frumento, sed maximam partem lacte atque pecore vivunt, multumque sunt in venationibus, quæ res et cibi genere, et quotidiana

combined the Celtæ, according to Cæsar, owed that immense height of body which rose so remarkably over the standard of other nations.

These circumstances may have contributed to the great ^{Cause of that phæno-} size of the Celtic nations, but they were far from being ^{menon.} the only cause. The Tartars, who migrated in the fourth and fifth ages into the provinces of the western empire, differed not materially in their manner of life from the Celtæ, yet they fell much short of them in stature. Among mankind, as in other animals, there seem to be a variety of species; some are by nature mere pigmies, others of gigantic proportions. No climate, no change of food can raise the Laplander to the height of the German: and subject the latter for ages to the intense cold and scarcity of food in the arctic circle, and he will not dwindle into the mean stature of the present inhabitant of Lapland.

Of all the branches of the Celtæ, the ancient Britons, ^{The British tallest of all the Celtæ.} the Germans not even excepted, were the greatest in the height of their bodies*. They generally exceeded by half a foot the tallest Romans in the days of Strabo;

quotidiana exercitatione et libertate vitæ (quia a pueris, nullo officio aut disciplina assuefacti, nihil omnino contra voluntatem faciant,) et vires alit, et immani corporum magnitudine homines efficit. Cæsar, lib. iv.

* Οἱ δὲ ἄνδρες ευμηκέστεροι τῶν Κελτῶν εἰσι. Procerissimi Celtarum sunt Britanni. Strabo, lib. iv.—Caledoniam habitantium magni artus Germanicum originem asseverant. Tacit. Agric. lib. ii. Σημεῖον δὲ τοῦ μεγέθους.

their wo-
men;

Strabo; and they rose beyond the standard of the Gauls, whose persons, according to an exaggerating writer, were of more than human size †. The women did not yield to the men in stature, and they almost equalled them in strength of body and in vigour of mind ‡. They were fair, blooming, and stately; just and full in the proportions of their limbs; active, high-spirited, and bold. Their long yellow hair flowed carelessly down their shoulders, and their large blue eyes animated their looks into a kind of ferocity less apt to kindle love than to command respect and awe.

their cha-
racter;

In modern Europe a fictitious respect is paid to women, in the ancient they possessed real consequence and power. They were not then chained to the distaff, or confined to the trivial cares of domestic life. They entered into the active scenes of public affairs, and, with a masculine spirit, shared the dangers and fatigues of the field with their husbands and friends. They unmanned not their countrymen in the hour of peril with vain terrors and complaints; they animated them to action with exhortation, and confirmed their valour with examples

γεθοις· αντίπαιδάς γὰρ ἡμεῖς εἶδομεν ἐν Ρώμῃ, τῶν ὑψηλοτάτων αὐτόθι ὑπερέχοντας καὶ ἡμιπῶδιω Strabo, lib. iv.

† Gallis insubribus corpora plus quam humana erant. Florus, lib. ii.

‡ Αἱ δὲ γυναῖκες τῶν Κελτῶν οὐ μόνον τοῖς μεγέθεσι παραπλήσιοι τοῖς ἀνδράσιν εἰσίν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ταῖς ἀλκαῖς ἐναμιλλοί. Mulieres Celtarum non proceritate tantum viros æquiparant, sed animi quoque viribus illos æmulantur. Diod. Sic. lib. v.

of personal courage ||. Routed armies have been known to return to the charge at their intreaty, battles have been gained by their timely interposition *. Strangers to the acquiescing disposition of other women, they scorned to survive the defeat of their friends; they snatched the triumphs of victory from the hand of the enemy, and rescued themselves from slavery by a voluntary death ‡. Instead of soothing the untractable minds of their husbands into concessions that might procure safety, they encouraged them to lose their lives rather than their liberty and independence.

The picture we have drawn will not probably please the refined ideas of the present times. But the high spirit of the Celtic women gave them more influence over our ancestors than our modern beauties derive from all their elegant timidity and delicacy of manners. The most unpolished Germans, according to Tacitus, thought that something divine dwelt in female minds: Women

their amazing influence.

|| Mulieres in prælium proficiscentes milites, passis manibus implorabant, nec se in servitutem Romanis traderent. Cæsar, lib. i.

* Memoriâ proditum est, quasdam acies inclinatas jam et labantes, a fœminis restitutas, constantia præcum et objectu pectorum, et monstrata cominus captivitate. Tacit. Germ. lib. viii.

‡ Conjuges Cimbrorum ea re non impetratâ a Mario, laqueis, nocte proxima, spiritum eripuerunt. Valer. Max. lib. vi. Mutuis concidère (*Cimbrorum conjuges*) vulneribus. Florus, lib. iii.

were

were admitted to their public deliberations, and they did not despise their opinions or neglect to follow their advice †. To such a pitch had some branches of the Celtæ carried their veneration for the fair sex, that, even in their life-time, a kind of divine honours was paid to some distinguished women §. The ancient Britons were peculiarly fond of the government of women. Succession, where it was established at all, went in the female as well as in the male line ||; and they convened with no less ardour round the standard of a princess, than they followed with eagerness their petty kings and chiefs to the field *.

Observations on the size of the Celtæ.

Some late writers have ascribed the enormous size and corpulence of the Barbarians of ancient Europe to their use of beer, the universal beverage of all the branches of the Celtic nations. Had the observation been just, the present English should exceed their fathers in stature;

† Inesse quinetiam sanctum aliquid, et providum putant: nec aut consilia earum aspernantur aut responsa negligunt. Tacit. Germ. lib. viii.

§ Vidimus sub Divo Vespasiano Velledam, diu apud plerosque numinis loco habitam. Sed et olim Auriniam, et complures alias venerati sunt, non adulatione, nec tanquam facerent Deas. Tacit. Germ. lib. viii.

|| Solitum quidem Britannis foeminarum ductu bellare testabatur. Tacit. Ann. lib. xiv. Neque enim sexum in imperiis discernunt. Tacit. Vit. Agric. lib. xvi.

* Dio. Cass. lib. xlii.

but

but this is so far from being the case, that they fall short of the modern Germans, and are scarce superior, in that respect, to the French, who, from possessing the grape, have for ages discontinued the drinking of beer. To strengthen the argument it may be here observed, that the inhabitants of London, who use beer the most, are of a smaller size than those who live less luxuriously in other parts of the kingdom. To solve the difficulty we must have recourse to a remark already made; that the Sarmatæ, who, upon the decline of the Romans, advanced into the regions of the West, were a very different race of men from the Celtæ, and that they sent down their low size, with their blood, to the present inhabitants of Europe, who are, in a great measure, their posterity †.

The great stature of the ancient Britons may, in some degree, be ascribed to the humidity of the climate under which they lived. The same temperature of air which favours the extraordinary growth of vegetables, may

Effects of
climate on
the size of
men,

† The general use of spirits, which has much prevailed of late in Europe, may have contributed to lessen the size of the present race. Distilled liquors certainly check the growth of the human body; neither is wine itself favourable to it. This much is certain, that the inhabitants of the mountains of Scotland have fallen much short of the stature and robust habit of body of their ancestors, within this last century, during which they have been acquainted with the still. Ale was their common and favourite beverage from all antiquity.

E e

contribute

contribute to increase the size of the human body, where it is not checked by that mode of life and hard labour which civil improvements have introduced into modern Europe. The inhabitants of cloudy regions and swampy countries, even at this day, exceed in stature those who live under a serene sky and on a dry and light soil. The Germans who possess the fens between the Scheld and the Elbe rise beyond the standard of the inhabitants of the upper Germany, and the English of the morasses of Lincoln exceed in size the inhabitants of the downs of Hampshire.

and beauty
men.

But whatever effect the humidity of the air had on the stature of the northern Celtæ, it certainly contributed to that whiteness of skin by which they were so remarkably distinguished. The beauty of their women *, those ruddy and florid complexions which glow in the descriptions of the ancients †, may, in some measure, be ascribed to that moist atmosphere which still clothes our fields with a kind of perpetual green. But the superior beauty of the Celtic women, as it was common to all the nations of ancient Europe descended from the same stock, must, like the stature of the men, have proceeded from their being a different race from the Sarmatæ, who

* Γυναῖκας ἔχουσιν εὐερεῖς. Diod. Sic. lib. v.

† Κελτοὶ καλλίστας ἔχουσιν γυναῖκας. Celtæ pulcherrimas habent uxores. Athen. lib. xiii.

carried

carried their homely looks with their small size into the regions of the West.

The uncorrupted chastity, the absolute abstinence from early venery, which a virtuous kind of prejudice established into an inviolable law among the Celtic nations, must have conduced to the immense size of their bodies. To have any commerce with women before the age of twenty was one of the most disgraceful and unpardonable of all crimes‡. Virgins were never given away in matrimony till their twentieth year; and thus the young couple, coming together in full maturity and vigour, transmitted their own strength and size to their children ||.

Their Manner of Life.

Our ancestors had the misfortune, if there is any misfortune in the want of importance with posterity, to be seen distinctly by foreigners before either time or accident had polished them out of their natural rudeness and bar-

Observations.

‡ Intra annum vigesimum fœminæ notitiam habuisse, in turpissimis habent rebus. Hoc ali staturam, ali hoc vires, nervosque confirmare putant. Cæsar, lib. vi.

|| Sera juvenum Venus, eoque inexhausta pubertas. Nec virgines festinantur; eademque juvenia, similis proceritas, pares, validique miscentur: ac robora parentum liberi referunt. Tacit. Germ.

barity. Nations who have the advantage of being the recorders of their own actions cover the beginnings of their history with splendid fictions, or place them in the shade to heighten the features of their more authentic fame. The light which the Romans threw upon the northern nations, in their uncultivated state, by rescuing their manners from oblivion, has taken away from their renown. Men accustomed to the luxuries of advanced society look with a kind of contempt on the inconveniences of rude life. This consideration has induced the Author of the Introduction to confine, within narrow bounds, his observations on the manners of the ancient British nations; for where the road lies through a barren country the journey ought to be short.

Agriculture, &c.

When the Scythian Nomades first became known to the Greeks they neither sowed nor reaped ‡; they derived their subsistence from the fruits which the earth naturally produced, from the chase, and the milk and flesh of their flocks and herds §. The Gauls were the first branch of the Celtæ who applied themselves to agriculture; and that earliest and rudest of all arts had scarce passed the Rhine, when Cæsar displayed in Germany the Roman

‡ Herodot. lib. vi. Nomades non sunt aratores. Arrian. Indic.

§ Herodot. lib. iv. 46.

Eagle ||. The Britons were probably before the Germans, in point of time, in the cultivation of their lands. Their vicinity to Gaul enabled them to import its arts; and their soil and climate was more favourable to agriculture than the cold regions beyond the Rhine; yet, in the days of Strabo, many of the inhabitants of Britain were strangers to the use of the plough*. In the infancy of agriculture, oats and barley were the only grains known in the north of Europe†. The first they parched before the fire‡ and ground in hand-mills, as some of the Scots and Irish did till of late years; and of the latter they made their favourite beverage, beer.

The art of extracting an inebriating liquor from corn § ^{Intoxicating liquors.} was known among all the branches of the Celtæ, before the

|| Germani agriculturæ non student majorque pars victus eorum, in lacte et caseo et carne consistit. Cæsar, lib. iv.

* Quidam Britannorum hortos colendi et aliarum partium agriculturæ prorsus ignari sunt. Strabo, lib. iv.

† Avenam Germaniæ populi serunt. Plin. lib. xviii.—Ἀλλὰ τὰς τε κριθὰς καὶ ἑσθίουσιν καὶ πίνουσιν. Dion. Cass. lib. xlix.

‡ Non ad panem conficiendum sed ad torrendum. Herodot. lib. iv.

§ Ligures utuntur potu hordeaceo; κριθίνου πόματος. Strabo, lib. iv.

—Est et Occidentis populis sua ebrietas, fruge madida. Plin. lib. xiv.

—The ancient Celtic nations were acquainted with the method of baking bread with yeast. Galliæ et Hispaniæ frumento in potum resoluta, quibus

the Greeks and Romans extended their information to the regions of the West. As the method of brewing this intoxicating liquid was not the peculiar invention of any particular country, it went under various names. The German appellation is still retained in the English word Beer; and the LEÄN, or LEUAN of the Scots and Irish is still famous in the rhimes of their ancient bards. Beer however was not the sole beverage of the ancient Britons; their Zythus, or water diluted with honey ||, was in much request; and they seem, with other northern nations, to have known a method of extracting a kind of cyder from wild apples *. When the Romans extended their arms to this side of the Alps the use of wine was introduced among the Celtic nations. The Germans, rude as they were in the days of Tacitus, were well acquainted with the juice of the grape; and we may conclude, from a parity of reason, that the Britons were not strangers to wine at the first settlement of the Romans in their country.

Household
furniture,

The household furniture of the Britons was neither splendid nor convenient. The best accommodated lay

quibus diximus generibus, spumâ ita concretâ, pro fermento utuntur, quâ de causa levior illis quam ceteris panis est. Plin. lib. xviii.

|| Οἰνομέλιος πόματι, χορηγοῦσας τῆς χώρας τὸ μέλι παμπληθές.
Diod. Sic. lib. v.

* Hic longas noctes ducunt et pocula læti
Fermento et acidis imitantur vitea forbis.

Virg.

on

on flock beds or on the skins of wild beasts spread on straw, rushes, or heath; and their chairs and tables were fashioned with the ax. The ancient Germans were not peculiar in having a separate table, when they ate in private, for each person in the family †; at their public entertainments, they used but one table for each rank of the people invited. The old bards have transmitted the memory of this, as a British custom, to modern times. The vessels used by our ancestors were carved out of wood or made of earth ‡. Their drinking-cups were, as has been already observed, originally either of shell or of horn §, though some more magnificent than others were possessed of goblets of silver ||.

The Celtæ were better clothed than some learned Clothing men have supposed, from the testimony of the ancients. Their peculiar custom of throwing away their loose garments in action gave rise to the opinion, that some of them went always naked. When the nations of antiquity first appeared in history they were but very slightly covered: the greatest part of the body was left bare; and the Persians were the first who adopted the womanish

† Apud Germanos separatæ singulis sedes et sua cuique mensa. Tacit. Germ. lib. xxii.

‡ Ex eadem materiâ (*fœtili*) sunt patinæ. Nonnullis patinarum loco, canistra lignea vitilibus contexta. Athenæus, lib. iv.

§ Vinum poculis corneis ac ligneis. Diod. Sic.

|| Est videre apud Germanos argentea vasa. Tacit. Germ. lib. v.

long stole of the East. In the various regions of Europe, they used for clothing the materials in which the country most excelled; but the fashion of their garments was universally the same.

of the various
branches of
the Celtæ.

In the northern regions, where game abounded, their upper coverings were made of the skins of beasts*: In Germany they used linen, especially the women, who sometimes wore printed garments†, and often long robes of white. The Gauls, like the modern French, delighted in gawdiness and shew‡. Their wool was coarse§; but they rendered their garments less homely with gold and silver lace||. In Spain, as at present, the wool was extremely fine**; the clothing of the Spaniards, therefore, was of

* Et pecudum fulvis velantur corpora fetis. Virg. de Hyperboreis Georg. iii.—Germani gerunt ferarum pelles. Tacit. Germ. lib. xvii.

† Fœminæ sæpius lineis amictibus velantur, eosque purpurâ variant. Tacit. Germ. lib. xvii.—Fœminæ fatidicæ Cimbrorum, albo vestitu, carbasinis supparis. Strabo, lib. vii.

‡ Εθῆσι δὲ χρῶνται καταπληκτικαῖς, χιτῶσι μὲν βαπτοῖς, χρώμασι παντοδαποῖς διηριθμμένοις, καὶ ἀναξυρίσιν, ἃς ἐκεῖνοι βράκας προσαγορεύουσιν. Diod. Sic. lib. v.

§ Lana eorum aspera. Strabo, lib. v.

|| Ταῖς εσθῆτας βαπτάς, καὶ χρυσοπάσσας. Strabo, lib. iv.

** Νυν δὲ ἔρια μᾶλλον τῶν Κοραζῶν (populus Hispaniæ) καὶ ὑπερβολῇ τις ἐστὶ τοῦ καλλοῦς. Strabo further observes, that such was the reputation of Spanish wool, that a talent was frequently the price of a ram when sold to other nations. Strabo, lib. iii.

slighter texture, and more elegant than that of the Gauls. The inhabitants of Britain used woollen clothing; neither were they strangers to the manufacturing of linen.

The party-coloured garments † which the natives Their make and fashion. of the mountains of Scotland have brought down to the present times, were the universal taste among all the branches of the Celtic nation. The Sagum of the old Gauls and Spaniards was no other than the Scottish PLAID of various colours; the Braccæ, from which a part of Gaul took its name, were the Highland Trousers, and the same with that worn by the Germans; which being strait and close to the skin, exhibited the shape of the limbs ‡. The ancient Britons, like the Germans, wore a close jacket of party-coloured cloth, which generally reached no further than the waistband of the Trousers. This jacket had a half sleeve, which came down to the elbow *. The vulgar wore a kind of half-boot and shoe in one, made of raw hides, and laced

† *Verficolori veste. Livius, lib. vii.*

‡ *Locupletissimi Germanorum veste distinguuntur strictâ singulos artus exprimente. Tacit. Germ. xvii.*

* *Vestis alta, stricta, verficolor, vix appropinquans poplitibus (this seems to be the jacket and felibeg in one, worn by the Scots of the mountains) manicæ sola brachiorum principia velantes. Sidon. Apol. lib. iv.*

fast before with small thongs*: the shoes of the better sort of people were of tanned leather §.

Dress of the
women.

The dress of the women was still more simple than that of the men. It consisted of a jacket without any sleeves, and a petticoat which reached down a little below the knee. Their bosoms were exposed to view, and their arms were bare †. Upon public occasions they used likewise a party-coloured Sagum or PLAID of finer texture than that worn by the men; and women of condition and rank hung a chain of gold, by way of ornament, about the neck ‡. In summer their jackets and petticoats were of linen stained with purple: In winter they were of wool, striped with different colours. Printed linens seem to be of Celtic invention.

* Pedes perone fetoso, tales adusque, vinciebantur. Sidon. Apoll. lib. iv.

§ The *Learach Carti* of the northern Scots.

† Nec alius fœminis quam viris habitus, nisi quod fœminæ sæpius liniis amictibus velantur, eosque purpura variant, partemque vestitûs superioris, in manicas non extendunt nudæ brachia et lacertos sed et proxima pars pectoris. Tacit. Germ. lib. xvii.

‡ Ἦν δὲ καὶ τὸ σῶμα μεγίστη τὴν τε κόμην πλείστην τε καὶ ξανθοτάτην οὔσαν μέχρι τῶν γλουῶν καθεῖτο, καὶ σρεπλὸν μέγαν χρυσοῦν ἐφόρει· χιτῶνά τε παμποίκιλον ἐνεκεκόλπωτο καὶ χλαμύδα ἐν αὐτῷ παχεῖαν ἐνεπεπορπητο. Dion. Cass. lib. lxii.

. . . . Lactea colla auro innectuntur.

Virg.

The

The Spanish ladies, in the days of Strabo, wore linen robes stained with the figures of various flowers §.

Though the Celtic nations had a particular aversion <sup>Dress of the
Celtæ very
sumptuous.</sup> to the changing of the fashion of their clothes, they became early luxurious and expensive in the article of drefs. The apparel of the Gauls and Spaniards especially was extremely magnificent. When they wore linen it was stamped or painted * with a variety of figures in different colours; and their woollen clothes were variagated, according to Strabo, with gold †. The Germans themselves as early as the beginning of the third century streaked their garments with silver; and we may conclude that the ancient Britons were not behind the Germans in their love of finery and show ‡.

The Celtæ were not only neat in their drefs, they <sup>Their neat-
ness and
cleanliness.</sup> were also cleanly in their persons. The character of dirtiness, which we annex to the Barbarians of ancient Europe, came from the East with those wild nations who overturned the empire of the West. The Sarmatæ, who were the ancestors of the greater part of the

§ Hispanorum mulieres floridis vestibus (ἀνθιναῖς ἐσθῆσι) utuntur. Strabo, lib. iii.

* Hispani linteis prætextis purpura tunicis, candori miro fulgentibus constiterant. Livius, lib. xxii.

† Καὶ τὰς ἐσθῆτας βαπτὰς φοροῦσι καὶ χρυσοπάσαις. Strabo, lib. iv.
—Auro virgatæ vestes. Sil. Ital. lib. iv.

‡ Germani Chlamydes argento variegatas gestant. Herod. lib. iii.

present inhabitants of Europe, were dirty to a proverb §. The Celtic nations were peculiarly fond of cleanliness: They bathed regularly every day || in the months of winter, as well as in the heat of summer; and they carried their love of neatness so far, that, according to Ammianus Marcellinus, in all the provinces of ancient Gaul, not one man or woman, even the poorest, was to be seen with patched or mended clothes *. The same writer gives a striking contrast to the Celtic neatness in the nastiness of the Sarmatæ†, whose dirty and ragged posterity croud, at this day, the streets of the most opulent cities in Europe. The cleanliness of modern nations proceeds from luxury, and is not general; it was the result of nature among the Celtæ, and was universal. Beggary and rags are of the improvements of advanced society.

§ Sordes Sarmatarum. Tacit. Germ. xlvi.

|| Statim è fomno lavantur. Tacit. Germ. xxii.—Germani locis frigidissimis lavantur in fluminibus. Cæsar, lib. iv.

* Terfi pari diligentia cuncti et mundi, nec in tractibus illis poterit aliquis videri, vel fœmina, *licet perquam pauper*, ut alibi frustra squalere pannorum. Ammian. Marcell. xv.

† Nec alia Hunnis domestica vestis, alia forensis, sed semel obsoleti coloris tunica collo inserta, non ante deponitur, aut mutatur, quam diuturnâ carie in pannos defluxerit, defructata. Amm. Marcell. lib. xxxi.

Their

Their Houses, Navigation, and Commerce.

Cæsar observes, that in Britain, which at his arrival <sup>Form of
their houses.</sup> swarmed with an infinite number of inhabitants, the houses differed little in the architecture from those of the Gauls *. The walls were constructed of boards or of hurdles †; the latter of which were plastered over with different sorts of clay of various colours, red, blue, yellow, and white, which made a splendid appearance where distance prevented the meanness of the materials from offending the eye ‡. They were of a circular form, the roof rose in a kind of cone to a great height, and was covered with straw §. In the center of these halls, which were of great size, there was supported on four pillars of wood a kind of wattled funnel, which, being plastered with clay, served the purpose of a chimney, and carried the smoke through the conical point of the roof. This tube, which was very wide below, served in part to light the hall.

* Hominum in Britannia est infinita multitudo; creberrimaque ædificia, fere Gallicis consimilia. Cæsar, lib. v.

† Τοῦς δ' οἶκους ἐκ σανίδων καὶ γέρρων ἔχει μεγάλους θολοειδεῖς, ὄροφον πολλὴν ἐπιβαλλούσας. Strabo, lib. iv.

‡ Quædam loca diligentius illinunt, terra ita pura et splendente, ut picturam ac liniamenta colorum imitetur. Tacit. Germ.

§ Casæ, more Gallico Stramentis erant tectæ. Cæsar, lib. v.

The

The sleeping apartments, which were divided from the great hall by partitions of planks, or of hurdles plastered with mortar, were lighted with small windows.

Stone and
brick
known,
but little
used.

Stone buildings were very rare, and though brick and tile were not absolutely unknown*, they were little used. It is probable after the Britons began to drop the old Celtic custom of an annual division of their lands, that some of their chiefs and petty kings had more convenient habitations than those we have above described. The political motives which the Germans advanced for a frequent change of habitation either existed not at all, or were not so powerful in Britain as they were upon the continent. When men settle in fixed abodes for any considerable period of time, the conveniencies of life gradually grow up among them, and they become objects of depredation to their less cultivated neighbours. Motives of safety from sudden incursions would certainly have suggested to the more polished Britons of the South the idea of building with brick and stone even before the Romans introduced both among them with their government and arts.

The vulgar
lived in huts.

The inferior sort of people, as they do to this day in the mountains of Scotland, lived in mean

* Λίθων μὲν γὰρ παρ' αὐτοῖς ἢ πλίνθων ὀπτῶν σπάνις. Herodian. lib. vii.

huts §: the walls of these huts were of sod, and their roofs covered with a light kind of turf, which frequently stood out for twenty years together against the injuries of the weather. This rustic kind of architecture remained in Italy in the days of Virgil ||; for the clowns of Mantua and Cremona lived in the turf cabins of their Celtic ancestors, at a time when Augustus boasted of having converted the brick edifices of Rome into marble.

In Britain, as in Gaul and Germany, the inhabitants built their houses in copses of wood*, to shade them from the heat of the summer, and to cover them from the violence of the winter winds. Naturally fond of cleanliness, they always fixed their residence on the banks of some brook or river into which they plunged every morning as soon as they rose from sleep †.

The Britons had scarcely any group of houses built in one place, which could deserve the name of a town ‡, when Cæsar first arrived in Britain. Like the ancient Germans, they avoided to build in continued rows to

Situation of
their houses.

They had
no towns.

§ Ἐν καλύβαις διαιτῶσι. Dion. Cass. lib. xxxix.

|| Congestum cespite culmen. Virg. Ecl. i.

* Circumdata sunt sylvâ domicilia Gallorum; qui vitandæ æstus causâ, plerumque sylvarum ac fluminum petunt propinquitates. Cæsar, lib. vi.

† Statim è somno lavantur. Tacit. Germ. lib. xxii.

‡ Οὐ πόλεις ἔχουσιν. Dion. Cass. lib. xxxix.

shun the accidents of fire. Thick woods fenced round with a foss and wall obtained, among the Britons, the name of a town §. This peculiar custom gave its origin to the word BALL, by which a town is invariably distinguished in the Gaëlic language; it being derived from BUAL, literally a fence or fold. It is not improbable but, even in the days of Cæsar, there might be some inconsiderable number of contiguous houses on the banks of navigable rivers, and on the shores of convenient harbours. The commerce, which, even in those days, was carried on in the ports of Britain, presupposes, in some measure, the existence of villages.

Their navigation,

The navigation of the ancient British nations was despicable, if compared with the improvements of modern times. They, however, ventured into the ocean in small craft of rude construction, which they managed with great dexterity ||. The keels and kelsons of their long-boats, for their vessels deserved not the name of ships, were formed of slight materials: The hull was made of wicker covered with raw hides*. Each end of the

§ Oppidum Britanni vocant, quum silvas impeditas vallo atque fossâ muniverunt. Cæsar, lib. v.

|| Etiam nunc in Britannico oceano naves vitiles corio circumsutæ fiunt. Plin. lib. vii.

* Carinæ primum et statumina ex levi materia fiebant, reliquum corpus navium viminibus contextum coriis intægibatur, cujus generis eum usus Britanniae docuerat. Cæsar, Bel. Civ. lib. i.

Mare

the vessel terminated in a sharp beak, and it was rowed indiscriminately either way †. They used oars ‡ for the most part, though they were not unacquainted with the sail; and they skimmed along the water with amazing facility and expedition. The size of those vessels must have been greater than is generally supposed, for the Saxon auxiliaries of Vortigern transported themselves in three of them from Germany to Britain. As, to use a naval phrase, they could live in any sea, it is probable that some of those boats were accommodated with slight decks.

The inhabitants of the north of Europe, it is highly probable, sailed, in a very early period, in vessels of a larger size and better construction than those we have already described. The Suiones or ancient Scandinavians had their fleets in the days of Tacitus §; and before the time of the elder Pliny, the northern nations not only ventured into the tempestuous seas of Norway but even passed over into Thule, which the learned suppose to be the

Mare quod inter Britanniam et Hiberniam interluit, navigant vimineis alveis, quos circumdant ambitione tergorum bubulorum. Solin. xxv.

† Tacit. Germ. xlv.

‡ Ἑρεσσοντες αἱ ναυτίλλουσι μόνον. Procop. lib. iv.

§ Suionum civitates, in ipso oceano, classibus valent. Tacit. Germ. xlv.

same with the modern Iceland ||. These voyages could not have been performed in open boats nor in hulls of wicker covered with raw hides. The art of ship-building, though perhaps in its rudest state, was known in the North when the first feeble light of history rose on its nations. Men who sailed to Thule could scarcely be unacquainted with Britain; and had the inhabitants of the latter neglected an art which their maritime situation must have naturally suggested to them, they must have certainly adopted it from the Scandinavians. Rivers, narrow arms of the sea, even the British and Irish channels might be navigated in open skiffs by the inhabitants of the western shores of Britain, but those on the German ocean may be supposed to have known as much of navigation as the natives of the opposite continent.

Their foreign and domestic trade;

The ancient British nations carried on some degree of foreign commerce, and exported commodities and manufactures *. The Isle of Wight seems to have been their chief mart. The tin, which Cornwall produced in great abundance, after being smelted into bars or cubes was carried thither, and exported afterwards to the nearest coast of Gaul; from which it was sent by land-carriage to

|| Sunt qui et alias prodant, Scandiam, Dumnam, Bergos maximamque omnium Nerigon; ex qua in Thulen navigetur. Plin. lib. iv.

* Ἀπολυπῶντες δ' εἰς ἀσραγάλων ῥυθμῆς κομίζουσιν εἰς τινα νῆσον προκειμένην μὲν τῆς Βρεττανικῆς ὀνομαζομένην δὲ Ἰκλιν. Diod. Sic. lib. v.

the

the mouth of the Rhone, and from thence conveyed by the Ligustic sea into Italy †. Their next great commodity was raw hides; and, after the Romans had settled in the Island, corn. Their manufactures for foreign markets consisted, in the reign of Augustus, of bridles, glass, and earthen ware, vessels made of a kind of a mixed metal, and other coarse articles, upon which the Romans raised considerable duties in the ports of Gaul ‡. The existence of a mercantile intercourse with foreigners implies a degree of internal commerce. The ancient Britons, who ventured their small craft on the ocean, may be reasonably supposed to have converted the convenience, which their rivers afforded for water-carriage, to the purposes of domestic trade.

Their land-carriage was performed, as at present, by the means of carts and waggons, long before the Romans introduced the conveniencies § of life with their government. That they went in chariots to war is universally known *: that they used them for the conve-

land-carriage and chariots.

† Itinere pedestri per Galliam ad ostia Rhodani deportant. Diod. Sic. lib. v.

‡ Ταῦτα δ' ἐστὶν ἐλεφαντινα ψάλια καὶ περιουχένια, καὶ ὑαλᾶ σκεύη, καὶ ἄλλος ῥῶπος τοιοῦτος. Strabo, lib. iv.

§ Diod. Sic. lib. v.

* Britanni dimicant non equitatu modò aut pedite verum et Bigis et curribus. Pomp. Mela, lib. iii.

nience of travelling, as we do our post-chaifes, is equally certain *. Some of those vehicles were more expensive than the tawdry equipages of modern times; for the chariots in which their petty kings fought in battle were frequently of solid silver †.

* *Εν ταῖς ὁδοπορίαις χρῶνται σηνωρίσιν.* In itineribus utuntur Bigis.
Diod. Sic. lib. v.

† Nil tam conspicuum in triumpho, quàm rex ipse Bituitus, discoloribus armis, argenteoque carpento, qualis pugnaverat. Florus, lib. iii.

G O V E R N M E N T

O F T H E

A N C I E N T B R I T I S H N A T I O N S .

Reflections on the Origin of Government.

SOCIETY is of greater antiquity than government. Rise and progress of society. Civil regulations confess, in their own origin, the pre-existence of public crimes. Mankind, like other animals, herded originally together through mere instinct; and they deceive themselves who think that communities were formed under a preconcerted system of policy. Man, in his rudest state, being destitute of property, neither fears nor meets with injustice: He possesses nothing which his own arm cannot defend, before the love of the conveniencies of life has overcome his neighbour's natural propensity to justice. In the progress of society individuals polish one another, as it were, by collision. The fruits of the ingenuity of one is adopted and improved by another: New inventions start up in every quarter, and are lost in none: Luxury grows with the increase of the arts of civil life, rapacity treads close on its heels; and then, for the first time, the check of law and

and regulation becomes necessary to the welfare, if not to the very being of the community.

Origin of
monarchy.

The popular form of government is more ancient than monarchy. The patriarchal authority from which some writers deduce the latter, is too much circumscribed in degree and time to be the fountain from which monarchy flows. The power which a parent has over his children cannot be transmitted to his son. He derives it from nature, and it dies with himself. Regal government is a civil institution, which in various countries owes its commencement to various causes. It generally takes its rise from a kind of usurpation; and, whatever theorists in politics may say, there were originally no stipulations made between the tyrant and the people. Length of time establishes into a kind of right what, at the beginning, was an act of injustice; and the acquiescence of the people constitutes into a moral duty that obedience which was at first the effect of fear.

Popular go-
vernment
older than
monarchy.

The simplicity of monarchical government has established with many an opinion of its superior antiquity. The infancy of society, like that of man, must be awed, say they, into good behaviour by the fear of obvious punishment. The slow movements of popular governments command no respect, and impress no fears; and therefore men naturally place the power of the state where

where it can be exerted with most expedition and precision. They who argue in this manner are little acquainted with the character of barbarous times. In the first stage of society there is no inequality between individuals: a man's mind must be opened with civilization before he will acquiesce in an opinion of his own inferiority. The Barbarian knows no person better than himself, and he submits to the dictates of none; deriving, in fact, from the vigour and independence of his own mind, that liberty which we owe to an accidental constitution of government.

Though monarchy, for the most part, begins in the midst of tumult and war, the very existence of regal power presupposes a considerable degree of civility in the community. The authority which the leader of a nation may acquire from personal merit in battle will die away in peace, unless the machine is kept in motion by the continued impulse of influence; and this influence, which is the foundation, if not the origin, of kingly government, is only to be obtained by having something to bestow upon abettors and dependents. A few being gained, through the channel of interest, the many are overawed into submission; and that lenity and impartial justice, which prudence dictates in the first periods of monarchy, contribute to reconcile the minds of the people to the government of one.

Monarchy
begins in
force, and is
supported by
influence.

In

Origin and
nature of
the popular
form of go-
vernment.

In the early infancy of a state, the only laws that subsist in the community are the opinions and prejudices of the people. Before property is well established, the catalogue of crimes is very succinct; and the punishments annexed to each are neither severe nor inflicted with precision. The people have not yet delegated their authority to a few; and the power that remains in the hands of the many seldom exerts itself with vigour. The society is kept together more by habit, and the absence of vice, than by any thing which deserves the name of government. The people, who have the whole power in their hands, convene only when they are to carry war into an enemy's country, or to defend their own. They consult together but on the external affairs of the community; its internal concerns are left to the opinions of individuals. This absence of all regulation may be called the most ancient form of government; and it may be distinguished by the title of a popular government, as the opinions of the people in general are the only checks upon the crimes and irregularities of individuals.

Form of the Ancient British Government.

The Ancient British Nations, like the rest of the inhabitants of the North of Europe, were extremely
fond

fond and very tenacious of their political freedom. ^{Their enthusiastic} Though, from a conviction that civil society cannot maintain itself without subordination, they had their judges, their princes, and kings, the power of those dignified persons was very much circumscribed §. In the midst of barbarity they formed as just notions of liberty as other free nations have done in the most cultivated times. They were convinced, that they not only had a right to elect their magistrates ||, but also to prescribe those laws by which they chose to be governed. The actions of the individual were cognizable by the BREHON or judge; the judge himself was accountable for his conduct to the general assembly of the people*.

The Celtæ in general were such enthusiasts on the ^{love of liberty.} article of public freedom, that they affirmed it was the natural property of animals as well as of men †. Their love of liberty was one of the reasons they gave for their aversion to industry and the accumulation of property; "for he that wishes to be free," said the Scy-

§ Nec regibus infinita aut libera potestas. Tacit. Germ.

|| Eliguntur in iisdem conciliis et principes, qui jura per pagos, vicosque reddunt. Tacit. Germ. xii.

* Coeunt omnes certis diebus. Tacit. xi.

† Libertatem natura, mutis etiam animalibus datam. Civilis apud Tacit. Hist. lib. iv.

H h

thians,

thians, “ought to have nothing that he is afraid to lose †.” Poverty is certainly the best bulwark against tyranny; nor were our ancestors much mistaken when they believed that the man who loves riches is capable of selling his liberty for money. The Celtæ through all their branches preferred their freedom to life itself. Their first maxim in war was to maintain their independence, or to prevent slavery by a voluntary death §.

Their
kings.

The department of the prince was to lead in war; in peace he sunk into an equality with others. Instead of considering his will and pleasure as a living law, they paid him no obedience but what he derived from their opinion of his merit *. They seemed to consider the chief magistrate, even after his authority had extended itself to times of tranquillity, to be only the guardian of those customs which occupied the place of laws. Their kings had no public revenue, and they stood in need of none when the subject attended them in war at his own expence; if indeed the equipping of an ancient Briton for predatory expeditions required any expence at all.

† Nihil parare quod amittere timeant. Justin. lib. ii.

§ Nec aliud sibi reliquum quàm tenere libertatem, aut mori ante servitutem. Tacit. Ann. lib. ii.

* Reges auctoritate suadendi magis quam jubendi potestate. Tacit. Germ.

It is certain that the ancient Britons, like their brethren on the continent, had their general assemblies^{Their general assemblies.} of the people, in which all affairs of public concern were decided by the plurality of voices *. In the small states into which they were subdivided, it was not impossible for the majority of those of perfect age to convene upon important occasions. Their resolutions must, in the nature of things, have been tumultuary and precipitate. They met principally for the purpose of making war, and they rushed with little deliberation into a state which they naturally loved. Domestic affairs were seldom the subject of debate; for a people before the establishment of landed property and a considerable degree of commerce can scarcely be said to have any domestic affairs.

The greatest improvements in politics rise from very simple and rude beginnings. When the state became extensive and populous, it was impossible for all its members to convene in general assembly. The expedient of delegation was obvious, and was naturally adopted; and length of time polished into what is^{Origin of representation.}

* Δημοκρατοῦνται ὥτε πλήθεις. Statu populari plurimum reguntur. Dion. Cass. de Caledoniis, lib. lxxvi.—Coeunt certis diebus. Tacit. Germ.—De majoribus omnes. Tacit. Germ.—Antiquitus unum quotannis principem, itemque belli ducem multitudo diligebat. Strabo de Gallis, lib. iv.

called a convention of the states the democratical meetings of the Celtic nations. The delegates being freed of the interruptions and confusions incident to the assemblies of the populace, found leisure to determine upon domestic as well as foreign matters; and this was the source of those civil regulations which we distinguish by the name of laws.—In the darkness which involves our remotest ancestors it is impossible to trace their government through all its departments with precision. The absence of those vices which exist only in polished society was probably the chief cause of the domestic tranquillity † which they enjoyed. Crimes, to use at once a paradox and a metaphor, are the parents of civil regulations; and necessity, which is said to have no law, is the source of all law.

Their Justice.

Man by nature just.

Man is by nature just. The love of pleasure, and the conveniencies of civil life, warp his soul in advanced society from the principles of rectitude and impartiality. The Celto-Scythians are represented by the ancients as the most just and equitable of men. The unbiaſſed feelings of a mind uncorrupted by selfish passions supply the place of civil regulation, and are even better than the coercive power of laws. The security derived from the innate integrity of men is

† Diod. Sic. de Britannis, lib. v.

more pleasing than that which arises from their fears †. The nation that boasts of the multiplicity and salutariness of its regulations conveys satire in self-applause; and, though the paradox is not in all cases just, we may venture to affirm, that those who have the best laws often need them the most ‡.

The open simplicity and integrity of the ancient Britons met with the approbation of those who were most their foes; and they yielded not to the Celtæ on the continent in their ideas and practice of justice between man and man. The stranger, the traveller, and the merchant, were secure in their persons and property, not by the severity of legal punishments, but from the natural propensity of the people to justice. Theft and robbery within the territory of the community were reckoned unpardonable crimes; beyond the limits of the state they took the name of predatory war, and were covered with honour and renown *.

Simplicity
and integrity
of the
Britons

† Plus (apud Celtas) boni mores valent, quam alibi bonæ leges. Tacit. Germ. xviii.

‡ Justitia gentis ingeniis culta, non legibus . . . quippe divitiarum cupido est, ubi et usus. Justin. lib. ii.—Justissimi hominum quia communia habent bona. Nicol. Damasc. apud Stob. S. lib. xxxvii.—So distinguished for justice were the Celtæ, that Agathias says, Januas ædium nunquam claudunt. Lib. i.

* Latrocinia nullam habent infamiam, quæ extra fines cujusque civitatis fiunt. Cæsar, lib. vi.

In

confined to
their domestic
conduct.

In commending the justice and integrity of our ancestors we must confine our applause to their conduct at home. To take every advantage of an enemy was one of their invariable maxims; and to carry devastation and death into the territory of their neighbours upon every slight occasion was, instead of being thought dishonourable, attended with fame. Though they did not, like the American Indians, excuse their cruelties by an aversion to war, for, on the contrary, it was the amusement and business of their lives, they frequently committed barbarities which can admit of little apology. To alleviate the weight of this reflection it ought to be observed, that the oppressions of the Romans, in the first period of their government in Britain, were sufficient to raise a spirit of implacable revenge in minds less irascible and haughty than those of the ancient British Nations. Neither were the Celtæ, in any one of their branches, very tenacious of the faith of treaties; their fickle disposition, and ardent love of liberty, rendered them careless in their observation of conditions imposed upon them in their misfortunes †.

Faithful in
the service
of foreigners.

Notwithstanding this defect in their public faith, they boasted frequently, and with justice, of the in-

† Gallica in fœderibus inconstantia. Polyb. lib. ii.—Fædifragagens. Sid. Apoll. lib. vi.

violable sincerity of their professions §. Their fidelity and attachment to the foreign princes whom they served in war were without bounds, and beyond example. It must however be confessed, that gratitude for favours received had a greater influence upon their conduct in this respect, than a regard for the virtues of the person whose arms they bore. A Nero ‡, a Vitellius, a Caracalla, were equally loved, and served with as much attachment as an Antonine, by the Celtic Germans; and the Britons, when they obeyed the Romans, made no distinction between a lawful prince and an usurper.—The ancient British Nations were equitable, just, open, and sincere, in private life; in their public transactions, like their Celtic neighbours on the continent, they were sometimes treacherous and cruel. The pale of their own dominions comprehended almost all their good qualities; they carried no virtue, except valour, into the territory of their enemies.

There was a species of theocracy among the Celtæ, as well as among the old Jews. Though they had magistrates and courts of justice, there was an authority superior to both, to which, in doubtful cases, they appealed. When either the question of right, or mat-

Their appeal to the sword.

§ Nullos mortalium armis aut fide ante illos esse. Tacit. Ann. lib. xiii.

‡ Sueton. Neron. xxxiv.

ter of fact, was not perfectly clear, the parties decided the suit by the sword *. Even witnesses, when they did not agree in their testimonies, were often obliged to settle the difference in their evidence by single combat. The decision of arms was reckoned more unerring than that of the magistrate: The appeal was to providence, and the judgment was that of God. To such a pitch of extravagance was this peculiar custom carried, that the candidates for public offices in the community, when their merit appeared to be equal, trusted their respective pretensions to the decision of the sword †. Ecclesiastical dignities have been acquired in the same barbarous way; and the chief Druid himself sometimes owed his elevation more to his dexterity in single combat with his rivals, than to the superior sanctity of his own character ‡.

* *Rigido jus dicitur ense. Ovid. Trist. lib. v.*—*Libido cuncta armis agendi. Tacit. Ann. lib. xiii.*—*Cum controversias invicem habent, arma sumunt, et tanquam aperto Marte congregiuntur; et putantur justiora dicere, qui adversarium occidunt. Nicol. Damasc. ap. Stobæum, lib. viii.*

† *Corbis et Orfica patrueles fratres, de principatu civitatis ambigentes, ferro se certaturos professi sunt. Livius, lib. xxviii.*

‡ *Nonnunquam etiam de principatu Druidæ armis contendunt. Cæsar, lib. vi.*

LANGUAGE

OF THE

ANCIENT BRITISH NATIONS.

General Observations.

NATIONS are not so tenacious of their customs and manners as they are of their aboriginal tongues. The first may gradually vanish in the growing improvements of civil life; the latter can only be buried in the same grave with the people themselves. Conquest may confine the bounds of a language; commerce may corrupt it; new inventions, by introducing new words, may throw the old into disuse; a change in the mode of thinking may alter the idiom: but the extirpation of those who speak any original tongue is the only means, by which it can be entirely destroyed, even where letters have been altogether unknown. It retires from successful invasion into rocks and deserts; it subsists with the remains of a people; even mountains and rivers in part retain it when the people are no more.

Nations tenacious of original tongues.

The Latin
not the mo-
ther of the
language of
France, &c.

That the Romans established their own language, in the regions of the West and North which submitted to their arms, is a position which the learned scarce ever doubted, and which the rest of the world still implicitly believe. The Latin has been considered as the fountain from which the Italian, French, and Spanish, derive their origin; and it must be confessed, that, in a confined degree, the opinion is extremely just. It is however certain, that this mark of their own greatness, which the Romans seem to have left in the conquered provinces, proceeded more from the reputation of their literature than from the power of their arms. The illustrious nation had too much sense to endeavour to impose their own language upon the conquered; and, had they even departed from their usual political prudence on that head, it is scarcely credible, that they could have succeeded in the attempt. All other conquering nations, to whom history extends its information, failed in their endeavours of the same kind. The victors have often adopted the tongue of the vanquished; but the vassals have scarce ever been known to drop their own language for that of their lords.

proved from
collateral ex-
amples.

The Arabs who conquered Persia, the Persians who subdued India, the Tartars who extended their empire over China, the Turks who reign in Greece and its Isles, have not been able to establish their own language

guage in their conquests. The servants of the court, the attendants of the prince, the posterity of the victors, in general, may retain the tongue of their original country ; but the bulk of the people will also retain that which descended to them from their fathers. The Romans themselves could never extend the Latin to the Provinces of the East ; on the contrary, the language of their Greek vassals prevailed, at last, over their own. The obstinate despotism of William the Conqueror, and the perseverance of those Norman and French princes who succeeded him in the throne of England, could not force the language of France on the English nation ; and the Lombards and Franks lost their own Sarmatic dialect in the tongues of Italy and Gaul. The cause is as obvious as the fact is true. The number of the conquerors bore no proportion to the vanquished ; and, in the article of language, the majority always prevails.

The connection, between the Latin and the languages of Spain, France, and modern Italy, must be traced to another source than the government of Rome. The nations who inhabited those extensive regions originally, and whose posterity still, in a great degree, possess them, were, in fact, the same people with the Romans. Those Gaël, who in Italy went under the name of Umbri, were partly the ancestors of the Banditti who settled with Romulus on the banks of the Tiber. The Romans,

Cause of the connection of the French, &c. with the Latin.

in their own aversion to commerce, vindicate, in part, their Celtic origin against their pretended descent from the Greeks of Magna Græcia, who were in some measure a commercial people. Some of their own writers join issue with us in this opinion. Their language, though tinged with Hellenisms, is radically different from the Greek; and we shall, in a subsequent section, have occasion to shew, that the primitives of the Latin tongue differ not materially from the language of a branch of the Celtæ, to whom neither the literature nor the government of Rome ever extended themselves.

The Celtic
once the
universal
language in
Europe.

A similarity in the language of different nations is, of itself, sufficient to establish the certainty of their common origin. Were all the historical monuments of the English and Germans, by some accident, lost, the identity of the radical words common to the language of both, would convince mankind that one of those nations must have originally migrated from the other. When the Romans threw the first light on the immense track of country which they distinguished by the name of Celtica, the same language as well as the same manners prevailed over the whole. The Æstiones, who inhabited Prussia and the banks of the Vistula, spoke nearly the same dialect with the ancient British nations*; and the Bastarnæ and Scordisci

* *Dextero Suevici maris litore Æstiorum gentes aluntur: quibus ritus habitus Suevorum, lingua Britannicæ propior.* Tacit. Germ. xlv.

who

who lived on the Danube, differed not much in their language from the *Æstiones*†. The Britons, in the days of Tacitus, spoke a dialect of the Celtic little different from that of Gaul‡; the Gothini of Silesia retained the marks of their Gallic origin in their tongue§. The inhabitants of Spain, if we except the Iberians, were Gauls or Celtæ, and must of course have spoken a dialect of the language of Gaul||; and the Gallo-Græci of the lesser Asia, being in some measure the descendants of the Bastarnæ and Scordisci, must have retained a part, at least, of the tongue of their ancestors **. From the pillars of Hercules to the mouth of the Danube, from the Hellespont almost to the Baltic, one language, though in a great variety of dialects, prevailed; and, from that circumstance, should no other proof be produced, we may conclude, that all the nations who possessed that immense extent of country sprung originally from one and the same source.

It is more natural to suppose that the Latin owes, in part, its origin to one of the dialects of the great and

The Latin descended from it in part.

† Scordisci Galli. Strabo, lib. vii. Bastarnæ Scordiscis lingua et moribus æquales. Livius, lib. xl.

‡ Sermo haud multum diversus. Tacit. Agric. xi.

§ Gothinos Gallica lingua coarguit. Tacit. Germ. xliii.

|| Galli occidua Europæ usque ad Gades incolunt. Strabo, lib. ii.

** Justin. xxxii.

general tongue which pervaded ancient Europe, than that it was formed by a few vagabonds who assembled together, for self-defence, on the shores of the Tiber. Some visionary pedants have been known to attempt the creation of a new language; illiterate men have always contented themselves with that which has been transmitted to them by their ancestors. In the progress of society, in the growth of inventions, a language is polished in its phrases, and enriched in the number of its words; but its first rude elements remain in its primitives, and serve to point out the fountain from which it originally flowed.

The Language of Ancient Britain.

General reflections.

Time, which effectuates a change in every thing, has a peculiar influence on language. In the less polished periods of society it grows gradually with advancing civilization; and, like those who speak it, it becomes corrupted through improvement. When literature and philosophy arrive at their height, for even these, like all human inventions, have their bounds, men of genius, as it were, arrest language in its progress, and secure, by their writings, its permanency to future ages. They put their seals upon it, and send it down to posterity in a kind of independence on accident. Before the establishment of literature, or where it is imperfectly known,

language, having no standard by which it can be fixed, fluctuates with the changing manners of the society; and the longer it runs down through time, it departs the further from its primitive simplicity.

To this circumstance, and not to a difference of origin, we must ascribe that diversity of dialects which Julius Cæsar found in Gaul. The Aquitani* were not understood by the Belgæ, nor could the Celt, at the foot of the Alps, hold any conversation with the Gaul at the mouths of the Rhine; yet no writer has ever affirmed that all Gaul was not possessed by one and the same people, though divided into separate states. The truth is, the identity of languages does not consist in their being mutually understood by the nations who speak them, but in the similarity discernible between the names of things which are common to all countries, and to every stage of society†. The Doric of Syracuse was not intelligible at Miletus; the Dutch can hold no discourse with the Silefians; yet the Sicilian and Ionian were Greeks; and one and the same nation possess the upper and lower Germany.

Cause of diversity of dialects.

* Οἱ Ἀκουῖται διὰφέρουσιν τοῦ Γαλατικοῦ φύλου κατὰ γλῶτταν. Strabo, lib. iv.

† Strabo says, that the nations of Gaul differed very little from one another in point of language. Παραλλάττειν ἐνίοις ταῖς γλώτταις μικρὸν. Strabo, lib. iv.

We

Three in
Britain at
the arrival
of the Ro-
mans.

We have, in a preceding section, observed that Gaul and the lower Germany had sent colonies into Britain, at three different periods, before the arrival of the Romans in the Island. The posterity of these must have differed considerably from one another in point of language: The Gaël, who still exist in North-Britain and Ireland, passed from the continent before the arts of civil life had made any great progress in Gaul; and, in some measure, retain the unimproved language of their ancestors. The second colony were the posterity of those Gauls, who, being anciently settled beyond the Rhine, returned into the regions of the South, under the name of Cimbri. The Cumri of Wales are their descendents; and they preserve, in their tongue, a tincture of the Sarmatic of the East and North. The British Belgæ spoke that dialect of the language of Gaul which still subsists among their posterity in lower Britanny. The three dialects which we have just mentioned, have been thought by many learned writers to be the only genuine remains of the ancient Celtic; and others have added to these the language of the mountaineers of Asturias and Gallicia. Some have even gone so far as to affirm that these four languages are reciprocally understood by the Scots, Irish, and Welsh, the inhabitants of Britanny, and the Spaniards who border on the Bay of Biscay.

The

The opinion is not just: The Biscayan has not even the most distant connection with the Celtic; the other languages derive, it is certain, their origin from one source: they agree in many radical words, but their idioms are different. The Welshman is as ignorant of the Gaëlic as the Spaniard of Arragon is of the dialect of Dauphiny; and the Scot knows no more of the language of Brittany, than the inhabitant of Palermo does of the tongue of Portugal.—In vain have the learned had recourse to the rude dialects of the Celtic, which remain in Brittany and Wales, to form upon them some idea of that language. What they sought after with so much eagerness abroad, was every day in their hands at home. The language of the Romans sprung originally in part from the Celtic stock; and the French, Italians, and Spaniards speak, in some measure, to this day, the tongue of their Celtic ancestors. To render the first part of the position probable, is to prove the latter beyond the power of reply.

Observations on the Biscayan, Armorican, Welsh, &c.

The Latin and Gaëlic compared.

The Gallic Umbri*, and their posterity, the Tuscans and Sabins†, were in possession of a great part of the

Origin of the Romans.

* Bocchus absolvit Gallorum veterum propaginem Umbros esse. Solin. viii. Umbros veterum Gallorum propaginem esse Marcus Antonius refert. Servius in Æneid. xii.

† Zenodotus Træzenius qui Umbrorum historiam conscripsit narrat Sabinos pro Umbris appellatos. Dionys. Halic. lib. ii.

lower Italy before the foundation of Rome was laid. These were the same with the Aborigines, whose peculiar and rude manner of life bore testimony of their Celtic origin. When the Greeks, from their possession of the arts which they had received from Phœnicia and Egypt, began to multiply their numbers in Peloponnesus and the Islands of the Archipelago, they sent abroad colonies who settled on the shore of the lower Italy, and carried on some commerce in its ports. Out of the vagabonds of these two very different sets of men Romulus collected the founders of Rome. The mixed manners, and the mixed language of the Romans, prove their double origin, and furnish a kind of demonstration that the illustrious nation derived their blood from the Celtæ, as well as from the Greeks of Magna Græcia *.

They derived in part their language from the Celtæ.

The Latin derives many of its roots and primitive words from the Greek; it also draws some from the ancient Celtic. The Scots of Caledonia were never subdued by the Romans; and they had little connection with that illustrious people. The Roman language cannot be supposed to have penetrated where neither the

* Veresimile barbarici etiam generis reliquias nonnullas e vicinis et prisceis incolis cum Græcis se conjunxisse. Dionys. Halic. lib. ii. Be that as it will, the Sabins were received into the city of Rome under Titus Tatius; and the Sabins were Umbri, and the Umbri Gaël.

literature nor the arms of Rome ever entered; yet there is a wonderful similitude, if not a perfect identity, between many primitives in the Gaëlic, and others that correspond with them exactly in the Latin tongue. This circumstance seems to demonstrate, that the Gallic Umbri of Italy, who were partly the ancestors of the Romans, and the Gaël of Caledonia, who were the sole ancestors of the ancient Scots, swarmed originally from the same hive.

To prove the position by example a short catalogue of corresponding words is subjoined in alphabetical order:

Latin compared with the Gaëlic or Caledonian tongue.

<i>Latin</i>	<i>Gaëlic</i>	
Aër	Aër	Air
Æs Eris	Eris *	Brafs
Ætas	Ette *	An Age
Agnus	Uan	A Lamb
Altus	Alt	High
Amnis	Amhon ‡	A River
Ancilla	Bancilla §	A Servant Maid

* Lhud's Archæ. Britan.

‡ Pronounced Avon.

§ From *Ban*, or *Bean*, woman; and *Cilla*, pronounced *Killa*, servant. It is observable that the C of the Latin is pronounced invariably like K in the Gaëlic language; which is a kind of proof that the Romans pronounced it in the same way: for instance, the Latin *Cera*, (wax) is pronounced KER in the Galic, though it is always written Cér.

K k 2

Anguila

INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY, &c.

Anguilla	A Ghellac	An Eel
Anima	Anim	The Soul
Aqua	Oicha	Water
Aquila	Acuil	Eagle
Arca	Arc	A Chest
Argentum	Argêd	Silver
Arma	Arm	Arms
Aro	Ar	To plough
Aurum	Ôr	Gold
Betula	Bëth	A Birch Tree
Bos	Bô	A Cow
Bulga	Bolg	A Budget
Bufo	Buaf	A Toad
Caballus	Cabul	A Sorry Horse
Cæcus	Caocha	Blind
Canis	Cana	A Whelp or Puppy
Cantor	Cainter	A finger
Candela	Caindel	Candle
Cannabis	Cannab	Hemp
Carus	Cara	Dear
Caritas	Caritas	Friendship
Cæseus	Caife	Cheese
Capra	Cabhar	A Goat
Cathedra	Cathoir	A Chair
Catus	Catta	Cat

|| Lhuel's Archæ. Britan.

Cella	Cealla	A Cell
Centum	Cêd §	An Hundred
Cera	Cêr	Wax
Cingulum	Cingul *	A Belt
Chorda	Corða	A String
Cicur	Ciocaí	Tame
Circulus	Circul	A Circle
Columba	Colum	A Dove
Cortex	Cort	Bark
Creta	Creadh	Chalk
Cruor	Cru	Blood
Culex	Culac	A Fly
Culter	Cultair	Coulter of a Plough
Cuneus	Ceuna	A Wedge
Currus	Carru †	A Chariot
Cura	Curam	Care
Decem	Dêc	Ten
Dexter	Deas	Right
Dies	Di ‡	Day
Deus	Dia	God
Domus	Dom	A House

§ Or *Cênt*, pronounced *Kênt*.

* *Cingul*, pronounced *Kingul*, signifies literally any thing that is wrapped round the waist.

† From *Car*, turning round; in allusion to the wheels.

‡ As in *Di-Luan*, Monday.

Duo

Duo	Do	Two
Durus	Dur	Hard
Equus	Each	A Horse
Fagus	Faiga	A Beech Tree
Febris	Feabras §	A Fever
Floccus	Floccas	A Lock of Wool
Frater	Vrather	Brother
Fulmen	Folmhein	A Thunder Bolt
Fundus	Fôn	Ground
Gallus	Caollach	A Cock
Gladius	Claidhea	A Sword
Hora	Urh	Hour
Hafta	Aftas	A Spear
Hordeum	Ordna	Barley
Lacus	Loch	Lake
Latro	Ladran *	Robber
Ligo	Leige	A Mattock
Linum	Lin	Lint
Lorica	Lurich	A Coat of Mail
Luna	Luan †	The Moon

§ From *Fea*, a vein; and *Bras*, quick; literally a quick pulse.

|| Literally *rushing fire*.

* From *Lader*, strong; in allusion to the force used by robbers.

† *Luan* is literally the full moon, from *Lan*, full.

Mala

Mala	Meil	The Jaw Bone
Manus	Main	The Hand
Mare	Moir ‡	Sea
Mater	Mather	Mother
Matutinus	Mattin §	Early
Mille	Mile	A Thousand
Mons	Monna	A Mountain
Nox	Noich	Night
Novem	Noif	Nine
Oceanus	Oicean	Ocean
Olor	Eola	Swan
Octo	Ochto	Eight
Ovum	Ouff	Egg
Quater	Ceather	Four
Quinque	Cuinc	Five
Rex	Ri	King
Sericum	Seric	Silk
Sex	Sé	Six
Septem	Secht	Seven
Sol	Solus	Light or the Sun
Sonus	Suain	A Sound

‡ *Môr*, greatness emphatically.

§ *Mattin*, literally good or precious light.

|| Pronounced *Aikean*, or *Aigén*

Tellus

Tellus	{ Tallu or Tellur }	Earth
Taurus	Taru	A Bull
Terra	Tir	Earth
Tres	Tri	Three
Tu	Tu	Thou
Tumulus	Tûm	A Hillock
Turba	Turba	A Multitude
Undecim	Hûn-déc	Eleven
Viginti	Fighint	Twenty
Unus	Hûn	One

A remark.

This catalogue might be extended to a much greater length, but nothing can be more tedious and unenterprising than a dry list of words. To remove every ground of supposition that the Scots of either of the British Isles borrowed any part of their language from the Latin it is necessary to observe, that almost every one word in the Gaëlic column is either a compound or derivative from some well known primitive in that language. The Gaëlic primitives are all monosyllables. Wherever a word of more syllables than one presents itself it is a compound; and all the adjectives are formed, by the addition of some termination or other, to a substantive noun.

Reflections.

To draw, in this place, a parallel between the Gaëlic, the Welch, and the language of Brittany, would

would not even have novelty to recommend it. The ingenious Mr. Lhud's comparative vocabulary is already in the hands of the curious ; and to such as are not fond of philological disquisition it is sufficient to observe, that the three languages, though not reciprocally understood by the Scots, Welsh, and the inhabitants of Britanny, are evidently descended from that tongue which the nations of Gaul carried in their migrations to every quarter of Europe. It is even demonstrable, were not the subject foreign to this Introduction, that the Italian, Spanish, and especially the modern French, owe their origin, to speak in a confined sense, more to the ancient Celtic than to the Latin, which was itself, in part, a dialect of that language.

A N

I N Q U I R Y

I N T O T H E

O R I G I N O F T H E A N G L O - S A X O N S .

Preliminary Observations.

Obscurity of
the remote
antiquities
of the
Saxons.

THE remote antiquities of the Saxons lie buried in the darkness which involved, in ancient times, the inhabitants of the northern Europe. Without the means of transmitting any account of themselves to posterity; at a distance from those nations who possessed the use of letters, their transactions were either lost in obscurity or disfigured with fable. In their progress towards the South, they gradually rose, as it were, from night; the light of history broke in upon them; and we see them, for the first time, in that rude form which a fierce combination of Barbarians wear in migration and predatory war. After the soil and climate of Britain had attached them to fixed abodes, their natural ferocity was mellowed down by degrees; the arts of civil life began to appear; and they were among the first of the European nations who committed their history

history to writing, and even whose transactions were worthy of being ordered.

The character, private life, and government of the Anglo-Saxons, after their settlement in this Island, furnish an ample field for disquisition; the monuments which remain of their history on the continent are few in number; and the subject itself is, in some measure, barren, from its high antiquity. But as nothing that concerns a people who have made so great and splendid a figure can be uninteresting, either to themselves or the world, the Author of the Introduction hopes to screen his own want of abilities behind the importance of his subject. He even presumes to think that he has thrown some additional light on those antiquities which he has endeavoured to represent in their least forbidding form. Should his confining himself to the history and manners of the Saxons in their rudest state be the chief objection to his work, he may perhaps remove it by descending hereafter into a more fruitful period: should the objection, on the other hand, arise from any defect in himself, he will derive some happiness from the thoughts of having spent but little time, in a province where he failed to please.

To investigate the origin of the Anglo-Saxons, to pursue their progress from Scandinavia with precision, it may not be improper to throw together some reflections on the

fall of the Romans; the decline of whose power opened the regions of the West to the migrations of the Barbarians of the northern Europe.

Reflections on the Fall of the Romans.

Cause of the
stability of
the Roman
empire.

The Romans differed not more from other nations in the rise and progress, than in the extent and permanence of their power. The fall of the republic, by melting down into one mass all distinctions of party, gave stability and weight to the state, when it destroyed the importance of the members of which it was composed. Feeble and corrupted in the center, the empire threw all its vigour and strength into its frontier, and became formidable abroad in the midst of domestic decay. The disputes about the purple, though frequent and bloody, were but partial shocks; they agitated and disturbed, but did neither break nor ruin the great fabric of the state. The storms were violent, but they did not last long; and things were soon restored to their original balance by the tranquillity of absolute government.

In what dif-
ferent from
other mo-
narchies.

The despotic empires of Asia raised by the abilities of one prince fall through the weakness of another: the fate of the state is involved with the life of the monarch, and when he dies in battle, or by the hands of the assassin, the great body, of which he was the head, submits to a foreign conqueror, or separates into petty principalities

lities under domestic tyrants. The imperial authority at Rome stood upon a more solid foundation. When the Julian family reduced the Roman republic into an empire for themselves, they did not change in appearance the ancient form of government. Though a new power started up in the state, all the old offices remained. Despotism had the decency to cover oppression with a mask, and to execute its most rigorous plans through channels neither unknown nor formidable in the days of freedom. The power of the first Cæsars consisted in influence; and an overawed and venal senate were the obvious instruments of their tyranny.

The interference of the imperial authority was confined to matters of state. The detail of inferior government, the course of justice between individuals remained in the possession of ancient forms. The oppressions of the worst of the Cæsars scarce ever extended beyond the walls of Rome; and the provinces which had languished under the exactions of republican præfects flourished under the lieutenants of a Caligula and a Nero. Though, vested with the sacredness of his tribunitian authority, no laws could bind the emperor, the empire itself was governed, in fact, by a regular system of laws; and therefore, when the tyrant fell, the state was not involved in his ruin.

There was one other cause which prevented the permanence of the Empire from depending on the fate of the prince. The hereditary succession, which the Julian family

Why the
permanency
of the em-
pire

did not de-
pend on the
fate of the
prince.

family endeavoured to establish, expired with Nero; and the suffrage of the army, confirmed by the approbation of a timid and complying senate, became the only necessary title to the throne. Men raised by accidental influence to the imperial dignity, though they enforced obedience, could command neither respect nor attachment from a people among whom they themselves had been so lately numbered as private persons. The multitude, who are, in every age and nation, the great supporters of hereditary monarchy, found no resting-place for their loyalty in the fluctuations of imperial succession; and they acquiesced, without reluctance, in the government of any ambitious leader, who had paved his way to the purple by private treachery or by open force.

The extension of the freedom of the city the first cause of decline.

One of the best of those, who held the reins of government at Rome, hastened the dissolution of the empire more than the very worst of his predecessors. The first Antonine, by extending the freedom of the city* to all the provinces, broke down the fence of distinction which, even in the midst of degeneracy, protected some small remains of the old Roman spirit. When the exclusive privilege of citizens was no longer confined to Italy, the awe which the conquered nations had for the original seat of greatness gradually decayed. When, to be born with-

* Dion Cassius says, that this was the act of Antoninus Caracalla, but other writers of credit affirm the contrary. It was only, perhaps, the freedom of Latium that was extended to the provinces by Antoninus Pius; that of the city by Caracalla.

in the walls of Rome no longer conferred any peculiar immunities, that mysterious tie, which bound the attachment of the citizen himself to the residence of his ancestors, was broken; and the veneration once annexed to the Roman name became naturally feeble, when the name itself was diffused over half the world.

But this cause of dissolution was neither obvious in its commencement nor rapid in its progress. The total The absence of all spirit in the provinces. absence of all spirit in the provinces balanced, for some time, its decline in Italy. The debility which tyranny and luxury carried from Rome through all its dominions, even contributed, though the opinion is singular, to the permanency and stability of the empire. The conquered nations, by being deprived of their arms, applied themselves to those enervating arts which, by administering to luxury, deprave when they polish the human mind. Timid and habituated to submission, they fell in love with the tranquillity of despotism; and in a kind of determination to continue slaves, they became indifferent about the title and virtues of their tyrant. The news of his accession was enough to establish the authority of any prince in the most distant regions of the empire; and many provinces were so dispirited and passive, that a military force was found altogether unnecessary to secure their obedience. No attempt at independence could be made by such an inactive body. Men were either ignorant of the natural rights of their species, or meanly resigned them for the abject security of servitude.

The

The general
debility
spreading to
the army.

The infectious debility which had seized the other subjects of Rome, did not, for some centuries after the extinction of liberty, overwhelm its armies. Born in the more distant parts of the empire, and stationed on its frontier, the soldier was a stranger to those enervating vices which extinguish the martial spirit. When the legions followed an ambitious leader to Rome, a dismissal from service was the common reward of their fidelity; and if they were depraved by licence they were soon dissipated and lost in the general imbecillity of the body of the people. They were succeeded in the presidial provinces by new levies of hardy and uncorrupted barbarians, who preserved an appearance of vigour in the extremities of the empire, after the center had exhibited every symptom of political decay.

The removal of the
seat of government.

The impolitic vanity of Constantine, in removing the seat of empire to a new capital, gave a mortal blow to the Roman state. The senate, whose consequence and authority had declined with their virtue, were, in some measure, annihilated by being transplanted to another place. The name, even the very walls of Rome, contained something within them which commanded obedience from the provinces. The opinion which supports all government was destroyed, by turning the attention of the people to a quarter to which they were not accustomed to look. They were habituated to obey implicitly

citly the mandates of Roman emperors and Roman senates; but to Bizantine princes and assemblies they paid only that cold and unwilling obedience which force extorts from slaves. To complete at once the ruin of that mighty fabric which the policy and virtue of ancient Rome had raised, Constantine, by creating new offices and by changing the names of many of the old, altered the constitution of the Roman government. This prince, in short, who covered with splendid exploits, in public life, the meanness and even wickedness of his private character, was more fatal to the permanency of the Roman power, especially in the West, than the most wretched and impolitic of his predecessors in the imperial dignity.

Julian, though endued with all the spirit, abilities, and even virtues of the old Romans, came too late into the world to stop the rapid progress of the state to its decline. His untimely death extinguished the last hopes of Rome. The vigour and prudence with which he conducted his measures in his early youth serve only to shew what he might have been in his riper years. Had he lived, there was a chance for the future permanency of the empire, a certainty of its temporary greatness. He fell, and the whole fabric of Roman power nodded to its fall when he died. The circumscribed abilities of some of his successors supported, for a few years, a part of the venerable ruin; but with every rude blast that rushed

gives a mortal blow to the empire.

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from

from the North and East some shattered fragment fell. Province was cut off after province, till the mutilated body at last expired, when Rome itself was taken and sacked by the Goths.

General Reflections on the Sarmatæ.

Of the Barbarians who were the secondary cause of the fall of Rome.

The bad policy of Constantine and the imbecillity which gradually arose from advanced civility and slavery, though they were the great, were not the only, cause of the ruin of Rome. The Barbarians of the North and East, who have even pervaded the regions of Asia itself with their migrations, gave the finishing blow to a state already tottering to its fall. Wandering like beasts of prey on the skirts of their own deserts, they saw the luxuries which prevailed within the Roman pale, and they made many attempts to break into the fold. Whilst vigour and discipline remained among the legions on the frontiers, they repelled with ease the irregular incursions of the naked Tartars of the North and East. But after the general effeminacy had extended itself to the army, enemies who, in the better days of Rome, were despised, became formidable and victorious. The fence being once broken down, the deluge soon spread over the provinces of the West; and that great fabric which was the work of many centuries, fell in less than the space of one.

It

It were in vain to attempt to penetrate the darkness The obscurity in which they were involved. which involved, at home, the Sarmatæ, who succeeded the Romans in the regions of the West. Destitute of means of conveying their own annals to posterity, the first feeble light of history was thrown upon them when they shewed themselves, in a hostile manner, on the frontiers of the empire. The writers who have sent down the earliest account of their invasions, astonished at their appearance, and alarmed at their cruelties, seem to have been more anxious to describe what they then were than what they had formerly been. They pushed not their inquiry into the origin of Barbarians whose ravages conveyed the first news of their name; and they were little solicitous about examining into the previous history of a rude race of men, whose incursions into the Roman territories were perhaps their first public transaction. To supply, in some measure, this defect in the latter writers of Rome, we must return to antiquity, and recapitulate some part of what has been already advanced concerning the state of Ancient Europe.

When the Greeks and Romans had extended their inquiries beyond the Danube and the Alps, they found, in the vast track of country which they distinguished by the name of Scythia, two nations different from one another in manners, customs, and language. To the inhabitants of the regions of the East and North-East of the Danube they gave the name of Sarmatæ; the Celtæ ex- Europe possessed originally by the Celtæ and Sarmatæ:

M m 2 tended

tended themselves to the West and the ocean. The character of the Sarmatæ, and their manner of life, was as opposite to those of the Celtæ as the barbarism common to both could permit.

the contrast
between
their charac-
ters.

The Sarmatæ, like the Celtæ, made war the business of their lives; but their troops consisted altogether of cavalry. They were so much addicted to riding* that they, in some measure, lost the use of their limbs†. They held their assemblies, transacted their affairs, they ate, they even slept on horseback‡. The flesh of their favourite animal, the horse, was numbered among their greatest delicacies; his blood mixed with milk was their most delicious beverage§. Before their migration to the South they wore the loose stole of the East, which descended down to their heels; their arms consisted chiefly of the bow and the arrow||. They were given to polygamy**.

* Sarmatæ equo viventes. Tacit. Germ. xlvi.—Equis prope affixi Sarmatæ. Amm. Marcell. lib. xxxi.

† Zozim. lib. iv.

‡ In ipsis (equis) cibum sumunt et potum, et inclinati cervice angustæ jumenti, in altum soporem ad usque varietatem effunduntur somniorum. Et deliberatione super rebus proposita feriis, hoc habitu omnes in commune consultant. Amm. Marcell. lib. xxxi.

§ Sanguinis potator equini. Virg. Georg. iii. Plin. lib. xviii.

|| Pausan. Attic. xxi.

** Connubiis mixtis utuntur Sarmatæ. Tacit. Germ. xlvi.

Their wives accompanied them to battle as well as to war * ; and their daughters, a singular mark of the ferocity of their manners, were debarred from marriage until they had slain an enemy in the field †. The character of the Celtæ was, in some respects, in the other extreme. Though they were not unacquainted with the use of cavalry, their chief strength consisted in foot. They drew their subsistence from their flocks and herds, from the chase, and the produce of their lands. Their dress was fashioned to the shape of their bodies and limbs ; and, in place of the bow and arrow, they carried the buckler and spear to war. Polygamy was unknown among them ; and though their wives and daughters accompanied them in their expeditions, women never engaged in battle but in the worst extreme of fortune ‡.

The European branch of the Sarmatæ, whose manners and character betray their Tartar origin, extended themselves over Poland §, the western Russia, and the

Boundaries
of their re-
spective do-
minions.

* Gens bellatrix, libera, indomita, et usque eò immanis atque atrox ut foeminæ etiam bella cum viris ineant. Pomp. Mela, lib. iii.

† Arcus tendere, equitare, venari, puellaria pensa sunt ; ferire hostem adultarum stipendium est ; adeo ut non percussisse, pro flagitio habeatur, sitque eis pœnæ virginitas. Pomp. Mela, lib. iii. — Ἐν μέντοι τοῖς νεκροῖς τῶν βαρβαρῶν, (Vandalorum) καὶ γυναικῶν σώματα ὀπλισμένα εὐρέθη. Dion. Cass. lib. lxxi.

‡ Vid. Character, Manners, &c. of the Ancient British Nations.

§ Vistula amne discreta Sarmatia. Pomp. Mela, lib. iii.

regions

regions between the Baltic and the extremities of the North. The Celtæ possessed the western Europe, Spain, Gaul, Italy, the British Isles, and a great part of Germany. These two great nations meeting one another on their frontiers, formed a third race of men, whose character, manners, and language, bore the strongest mark of their mixed origin. Such were the Peucini, the Venedi, and Fenni, of Tacitus, who, though classed among the old Germans, were tinctured with the loose manners, and characteristical dirt and laziness of the Sarmatæ †.

Progress of
the Sarmatæ
to the South.

In the period of time between the days of Tacitus and the reign of Marcus Aurelius, the mixed breed of the Celto-Sarmatic Germans of the North became so numerous on the shores of the Baltic, that, under the name of Vandals and Marcomanni ‡, they advanced into Pannonia, crossed the Danube, and ravaged the Roman territories §. The emperor opposed them in person, and after, in his second expedition, he died at Sirmium, the Barbarians were driven back by the valour

† Peucinorum, Venedorum, et Fennorum nationes Germanis an Sarmatis adscribam dubito. Sordes omnium ac torpor; procerum connubiis mixtis, nonnihil in Sarmatarum habitum foedantur. Tacit. Germ. xlvi.

‡ Marcomanni signifies *horse-men* in the Celtic language; a proof of their Sarmatic origin.

§ Pannonias ergo, et Marcomannis, Sarmatis Vandalis extinctis, servitio liberavit. Capitolin. in Antonin. Philosoph. xvii.

and

and conduct of Pertinax, who commanded in Dacia and the two Mæſias ||. Recruited by new migrations from the Sarmatæ beyond the Viſtula and the Baltic, they attempted to break into the Roman dominions in the reign of Commodus, but with no ſucceſs: Maximin and Diocleſian obtained ſignal victories over them *; and, in ſhort, as long as the empire retained any vigour on its frontier, the legions found means to repel the depredatory armies of the northern Sarmatæ.

The enemies with whom the Romans contended in the decline of their empire were far from being the ſame race of men who oppoſed them when they firſt penetrated with their arms beyond the Alps. The whole dominions of the Celtæ, excepting a part of Germany, the northern Britain, and Ireland, fell under the power of Rome during its political vigour. The Sarmatæ of Scandinavia, with that fondneſs for migration which they exhibited in all ages, advanced gradually into Germany, and, being ſtopt in their progreſs by the legions ſtationed on the Rhine and Danube, ſettled between the Baltic, the ocean, and the two great rivers juſt mentioned, and roſe into various petty nations, whoſe manners bore evident marks of

The ances-
tors of the
Barbarians
who over-
turned the
empire.

|| Καὶ ἡρίσεν (ſcilicet bello Vandalico et Marcomannico) ὁ Περτίναξ.
Dion. Caſſ.

* Ab aquilone barbaræ feræque nationes Sarmatarum domitæ.
Pomp. Lat. lib. lxxi.

their

their mixed origin. The blood of the Sarmatæ seems however to have most prevailed; for the language and character which the Barbarians who overturned the empire carried with them into the South of Europe were much more nearly allied to the Sarmatic Tartars of the East than to the Celtic nations who possessed the West. The writers therefore who affirm, that the present language of Germany is the remains of the old Celtic, deceive themselves and the public. The truth is, the modern Germans are almost as little concerned in those barbarous tribes, whom Tacitus so elegantly describes, as the Turks of Peloponnesus are in the history and manners of the ancient Spartans.

Origin of the Anglo-Saxons.

Goths and
Vandals.

The Goths and Vandals, who made such a great figure in Europe, originally possessed a part of that immense tract of country which lies between the Baltic and the northern ocean †. In a period of remote antiquity they quitted their ancient seats in Scandinavia, and seized on the southern shore of the Baltic from the mouth of the Vistula to the Elb and the German ocean. The Vandals were the principals in this great

† Ex Scanzia, cum regi suo, nomine Berich, Gothi quondam memorantur egressi. Jornandes sub initium libri de rebus Gothicis.

Gothi siquidem, Wandalique, nec non etiam aliæ feroces et barbaræ nationes e Germaniâ ab insulâ quæ Scandinavia dicitur prodierunt. Paul. Diac. lib. i.

migration,

migration, which must have happened a considerable time before their first appearance on the confines of the Roman dominions in the reign of Marcus Aurelius. Their situation in Germany was to the West of the Goths; and they were subdivided into a variety of small communities ‡, each of which made a distinguished figure in the inundation of Barbarians which overwhelmed the western empire after the death of the first Theodosius.

The Angli, from whom the majority of the English ^{Origin of the Angli;} nation derive their blood, and the whole their name, were one of the small states which the Romans comprehended under the general name of Vandals. Tacitus has had the good fortune to have dignified his account of the Germans with the first mention of a nation who have since made such an illustrious figure in the world §. They, however, promised but little of their future greatness in the days of the elegant writer. He passes slightly over them in a catalogue of obscure tribes, who were remarkable for nothing but the peculiar worship they paid to Hertha, or the earth, well known to be the great goddess of the Scandinavian Sarmatæ, who were the ancestors of the Angli. They seem to have

‡ Vandeli, quorum pars Burgundiones, Varini, Carini, Angli, Guttones. Plin. lib. iv.

§ Aviones et ANGLI, et Varini, fluminibus et sylvis muniuntur. Tacit. Germ. xl.

been in possession of that part of the shore of the Baltic which extends from the Vekel to the Drave. The Elb bounded their territories to the South; the tribe of Vandals distinguished by the name of Varini bordered with them on the East, and their friends and allies the Saxons lay between them and the German ocean.

Of the Sax-
ons.

The Saxons derived their origin from the same source with the Angli. The perfect identity in point of customs, manners, and religion, which subsisted between these two tribes, their unanimity in expedition and war, the facility with which they were lost in one another in their British conquests, prove, beyond dispute, that the names of Angli and Saxons were but two appellations for one and the same people. The western Vandals are, for the first time, mentioned under the name of Saxons by Ptolemy *, who flourished in the reign of Marcus Aurelius. The signification of their name is involved in that impenetrable darkness which covered their original country, the ancient Scandinavia; and the learned men who have attempted to investigate its etymon have exposed their own ignorance without having thrown any light on the subject.

Their pro-
gress to the
South.

When the Roman empire began to decline, the Saxons, like the rest of the Sarmatic Germans, availed

* Ἐφεξῆς δὲ ἐπὶ τὸν αὐχένα τῆς Κιμβρικῆς χερσονήσου Σάξονες.

themselves

themselves of its debility, and indulged their natural love of depredation by descents on the coasts of the maritime provinces *. The situation of the Angli on the shore of the Baltic, that of the Saxons on the German ocean, and the knowledge of naval affairs which both derived from the Suiones, who were their ancestors in Scandinavia, rendered them a troublesome enemy to the empire † a whole century before its fall ‡. During that period they gradually possessed themselves of the whole shore of the German ocean from the Elb to the Rhine; and after the Franks had forced their way into Gaul, the Saxons succeeded them in their ancient seats in Germany, and formed an ample dominion in that country, before they found means to establish themselves in a better soil and climate.

The history of the Saxons before their arrival in Britain is comprehended in the transient notice taken of their piracies by the writers of Rome. Like the other Their history on the continent little known.

* Σάξονες, οἱ πάντων δὴ καρτερώτατοι τῶν ἐκεῖσε γενομένων βαρβάρων θυμῷ καὶ ῥώμῃ καὶ καρτερίᾳ τὰ περὶ τὰς μάχας εἶναι νομίζοντες, Καύχους μοῖραν σφῶν ὄντας εἰς τὴν ὑπὸ Ρωμαίων κατεχομένην ἐκπέμπουσι γῆν. Zosim. lib. iii.

† Erupit Saxonum multitudo, et oceani difficultatibus permeatis Romanum limitem gradu patebat intento. Amm. Marcell. lib. xxvii.

‡ The Franks and Saxons infested the coast of Gaul in the reign of Dioclesian. Eutrop. lib. ix.

nations whose expeditions proved fatal to the power of the Romans they advanced in a cloud of darkness into the regions of the South. Ignorant of letters, they had not the means of transmitting any account of themselves to after ages, and those who could record their actions were the natural enemies of their fame. Neither is the loss which their posterity have suffered from this circumstance either considerable or to be much regretted. The Barbarians of the northern Europe carried scarce any virtue, except valour, into the conquered provinces. Their object was to get settlements for themselves, and not to procure subjects; and to obtain the former, they exercised every species of inhumanity against the latter. Time, however, has, in its progress, worn off their ferocity; and the nations of modern Europe have been rendered independent of the absence of history among their ancestors by their own proper fame.

RELI

RELIGION AND GOVERNMENT
OF THE
ANGLO-SAXONS.

Their Religion.

MEN not favoured with revelation give their own General observations. passions and prejudices to the divinities whom they adore. Brought up in battle, and habituated to blood, the northern nations made their Gods as fierce and untractable as themselves. The character which they give of Odin differs, in no respect, from the pictures we have of those bold and intrepid warriors who led them into the regions of the South. His hall was not better furnished than the rude mansion of a Saxon chief, nor was his table provided with any other fare than the fat of an inexhaustible wild boar *, which, though regularly boiled every morning for dinner, remained at night entire. Ale, the favourite beverage of the North, went round in the skulls of the enemies of his followers and friends †; and arms, which were the delight of the Saxon in this life,

* Sufficere illis queat lardum apri, qui Scrimner vocatur. Is quotidie elixatur, sed vespere integer remanet. Edda Island. Mythol. xxxiii.

† In craniis inimicorum brevi bibam in præstantis Odini Aula. Regn. Lodbrog.

continued

continued to be his amusement in another world ‡. Battle was the daily pastime, and slaughter itself the recreation, of the blessed. The deaths which were the consequences of these conflicts were, however, temporary; for the slain, upon the approach of the time of dinner, started up as if nothing had happened, rode* into the Valhalla, and sat down to serious drinking.

Their mode
of worship.

The mode of worship among the Saxons was as simple as their ideas of the divinity were unrefined. A great log of unfashioned wood perpendicularly raised in the open air was the common representative of Odin. This idol they distinguished by the name of IRMINSUL, a word which, in their language, signified the universal pillar which sustains the world †. There is a kind of philosophy in this meaning which agreed but little with the general character of the sanguinary God. The Sarmatæ, who worshipped him under the figure of a sword, formed more suitable ideas of a Power who delighted in human blood §.

‡ *Recreatio autem mono heroum quotidiana hæc est . . . mutuis ster-
nentur cædibus. Hic illorum ludus. Instanti vero prandii tempori
omnes incolumes in aulam equitant et ad potandum confident. Edda
Island. Mythol. xxxv.*

* The Sarmatæ, it seems, carried their favourite animal, the horse, into their paradise.

† *Truncum ligni non parvæ magnitudinis, in altum erectum sub dio
colabant, patria eorum linguâ, IRMINSUL appellant quod Latinè dicatur
universalis columna quasi sustinens omnia. Adam. Berm. vi.*

§ *Mars omnium Scytharum deus; ei pro simulacris enses. Pomp.
Mela, lib. ii.*

Some writers, who have unnecessarily raked up the antiquities of the North for arguments in favour of our present religion, have hugged themselves in the thoughts of having found a Trinity in the mythology of the old Scandinavians. Odin, Thor, and Frea § are said to have been the only powers dignified with places of worship and statues, though a number of inferior intelligences were respected and venerated. But Thor is only the title of Thunderer, annexed, by all nations, to the Supreme Divinity ‡. Odin was worshipped under that name as presiding over the regions of the air, as the ruler of tempests, the director of thunder, the lord of the weather, and protector and nourisher of the fruits of the earth ||.

Their three
divinities.

The Saxons and their Scandinavian ancestors having given human passions to Odin, accommodated him also with a wife *. Contrary to the practice of the Celtæ, they admitted a female divinity into the catalogue of their Gods; which furnishes another argument of their Sarmatic origin. The Angli, in the days of Tacitus, worshipped the Earth under the name of Hertha; and it was the same divinity who afterwards obtained the title of Frea,

Frea, Odin's
wife.

§ Suecis trium deorum erectæ imagines habebantur, Thor, Odin, et Frea. Ericus Olaus, lib. i.

‡ Unum Deum fulguris effectorum solum agnoscunt. Procop. Goth. lib. i.

|| Thor præsidet in aëre, tonitrus et fulmina, ventos, imbresque, serena et fruges gubernat. Thor cum sceptro Jovem exprimere videtur. Adam. Brem. ccxxxiii.

* Paul. Diacon. Hist. Longob. lib. i.

the

the spouse of the great Odin. Men who deduce every system of religion from rational principles, may rest the origin of that of the Saxons on philosophy. Odin was the irresistible principle which gives motion to every thing that breathes ; and Hertha, Frea, or the Earth, furnished that portion of matter which is animated into living creatures, by the active and pervading spirit, which is distinguished under the name of God.

Worship of
Freia under
the name of
Hertha, or
the Earth.

Tacitus, with his usual precision and elegance, describes the veneration which the Angli and their neighbours on the Baltic paid to the spouse of Odin. Her worship filled the minds of her devotees with sentiments very opposite to those which the bloody altars of Odin inspired. During the feast which was held in honour of Hertha an universal joy spread over the country. Benevolence and hospitality prevailed in every quarter ; war and discord ceased ; and it was then only that peace and quiet were either known or loved. The universal parent of mankind did not, they thought, delight in the destruction of her race ; and therefore every instrument of death was shut up during her supposed residence in the land. When she retired to her sacred grove, her warlike worshippers, whose bent to humanity was only temporary, recoiled with violence into the favourite occupation of slaughter and war*.

Though

* In commune Hertham, id est, terram matrem, colunt. Est in insula oceanici castum nemus, dicatum in eo vehiculum veste contextum. Sacerdos

Though no apology can wash away the stain which the blood of human victims has left on the hands of our ancestors, there are circumstances which may lessen the horror which naturally rises in the mind against a practice so opposite to every idea of humanity. An uninterrupted acquaintance with danger created, among the northern nations, a contempt for death, which, in the firm belief of an immediate entrance into a life of joy and festivity in Odin's hall, they looked upon as a blessing rather than a misfortune. A demise through violence, in battle, through suicide, or by the hands of the priest, procured an immediate admission into the northern paradise. It was only the unfortunate persons who died of disease or age that were precipitated into the dark dominions of Hela †. Self-preservation, that first principle of the human mind, seems to have vanished before the strength of this extraordinary prejudice. When danger rose to its height it became a source of elevation and

Human sacrifices.

dos adesse deam penetrati intelligit vectamque bobus feminis multa cum veneratione prosequitur. Læti tunc dies, festa loca quæcunque adventu hospitioque dignatur. Non bella ineunt, non arma sumunt clausum omne ferrum: pax et quies tunc tantum nota, tunc tantum amata, donec sacerdos Deam templo reddat. Tacit. Germ. lx.

† Helam vero in Niffenheim demisit, imperiumque dedit super mundos novem, ut mansiones inter eos qui ad ipsum mittuntur, distribuat. Hic sunt omnes ex morbis et senio mortui homines. Edda Island. Mythol. xxviii.

O o

joy,

joy, as it brought within view a certainty of perpetual felicity in another world ‡.

The Scan-
dinavian and
Celtic para-
dises com-
pared.

The paradise of the Sarmatæ differed in many respects from that of the Celtæ. The Valhalla, or hall of Odin, was placed on the top of the high mountains of Sevo; the Celtic nations surrounded their Fortunate Island with tempest in the Atlantic ocean. Among the Sarmatæ, only those who fell by the sword were admitted to the table of Odin: Such as died of disease or age went to the regions of Hela under the earth. Men slain in battle were, among the Celtæ, entitled to a more elevated degree of happiness in their paradise; but the peaceable and unwarlike had also a beautiful Island of their own. Fighting, drinking, and the ministration of young virgins comprehended the joys of the Valhalla: the Celtic heroes wandered after a variety of rural pleasures over the face of a beautiful and extensive country. The heroes of the former were always in the presence of Odin: There is no mention made of the Divinity in the Celtic Paradise *. The Sarmatæ remained for ever in the

‡ In acie exultabant, tanquam gloriose et feliciter vita excessuri. Lamentabantur in morbo quasi turpiter et miserabiliter perituri. Valer. Max. lib. ii.

* The Druids, considering the Divinity as the pervading Spirit which gave life and motion to the whole body of nature, formed no ideas of him as a personal existence.

Valhalla;

Valhalla; the souls of the departed retaining, among the Celtæ, a warm affection for their country and living friends, often returned to visit them. The Sarmatæ admitted a good and a bad principle in their mythology; they had their Hell as well as their Heaven: the Celtæ placed nothing but endless felicity beyond the limits of the present life.

Their Government.

The want of information, which induced the writers of Rome to remove the northern limits of ancient Germany to the pole, was a source of error to the learned of modern times. The latter have extended the general character of the Celtic nations between the Rhine and the Elb, to the inhabitants of Scandinavia and the shores of the Baltic. In vain have the wild nations of the north advanced into the southern Europe with positive proofs of their own Sarmatic origin; men of letters have chosen to make them Celtæ; and Celtæ, in spite of all evidence to the contrary, they must remain. To differ from the learned in this point is neither precipitate nor presumptuous. The ancients give no countenance to their opinion, and the unmixed posterity of those nations, who overwhelmed the empire of the West, argue against them with all the force of language, manners, and government. To the origin of the latter we shall, at present, confine our inquiries.

General observations.

Monarchs
absolute
among the
Scandina-
vians ;

The Scandinavians, in the days of Tacitus, were subject to absolute monarchy. They were a commercial people * ; established property had attached them to fixed abodes. Wealth was honoured among them, and they acquiesced under the unlimited despotism of one †. Secured by their situation from foreign enemies, their domestic spirit declined ‡. They suffered themselves to be disarmed by their princes ; and thus the tyranny of Asia, in the absence of its luxury, prevailed under the pole. The Sitones of Norway were even more abject than their brethren to the East of the mountains of Sevo. They not only degenerated from liberty but even from slavery itself : they submitted to the government of women, and added disgrace to servitude §. This attachment to hereditary succession continued among the colonies which Scandinavia established to the South of the Baltic. The Rugii, the Lemovii ||, all the Vandals from the Isle of Rugen to the German ocean, as well as their brethren

* Suionum hinc civitates, in ipso oceano, classibus valent. Tacit. Germ. xlv.

† Est apud illos et opibus honos ; eoque unus imperitat, nullis exceptionibus, non precario jure parendi. Tacit. Germ. xlv.

‡ Subitos hostium incursus prohibet Oceanus. Tacit. Germ. xlv.

§ Fœmina dominatur : non modo à libertate sed etiam à servitute degenerant. Tacit. Germ. lxv.

|| Rugii et Limovii ; omniumque harum gentium insigne erga reges obsequium, Tacit. Germ. xlvi.

the

the Sarmatic Gothones on the Vistula, were distinguished by their obedience to kings*.

It is however certain, that the monarchs of the Scandinavian Sarmatæ lost their influence in the progressive migrations of their subjects towards the South. The Goths and Vandals, the undoubted ancestors of the modern English, were remarkable for their attachment to civil liberty. Though the crown was hereditary in certain families †, though their princes vaunted their descent from Odin the first of the Gods, their power ‡, and even the possession of their dignity, depended upon the general assembly of the people, whose resolutions they were always obliged to carry into execution §. In expedition and war the king was respected ||; but destitute of the power of inflicting any punishment upon the disobedient, his authority was nugatory **. With war the

very limited
among the
ancestors of
the Saxons.

* Gothones regnantur, paulo jam adductius quam ceteræ gentes. Tacit. Germ. xliii.

† Reges habent ex genere antiquos. Adam. Brem.

‡ Nondum tamen supra libertatem. Tacit. Germ. xliii.—Rex apud eos modicæ æstimationis est. Helmold de Rugiis, lib. ii.

§ Quod in commune laudaverint omnes illum confirmare oportet. Adam. Brem. ubi supra.

|| In prælium euntes omnem præbent obedientiam regi. Adam. Brem.

** Neque animadvertere, neque vincere, neque verberare permissum. Tacit. Germ. vii.

reverence

reverence for his person was at an end. Indignity was added to his want of consequence and power; the meanest of his subjects sat with him at table, joined in his conversation, used him with contempt, and disgraced him with scurrility*. The kings of the Goths, a nation descended from the same stock with the Saxons, enjoyed no honour and met with no respect†. The rabble being, by the strength of established custom, admitted to the entertainments of the prince, the unhappy man, instead of being treated with the reverence due to his rank, was often obliged to purchase with presents a decency of behaviour from his barbarous guests‡.

who frequently de-
throned and
punished
with death
their kings.

This species of rude liberty degenerated sometimes into licence in the extreme. Barbarians who used such freedoms with their prince, must naturally have a contempt for his character and authority. They sometimes persecuted him to death itself, for no other cause but that they were determined to submit to the commands of

* Πρότερον ὄνομα μὲν παρ' αὐτοῖς ὁ βασιλεὺς εἶχεν· ἰδιώτῃ δὲ ὀτιᾶν ἔδέν τι σχεδὸν ὀφερέτο πλέον· ἀλλὰ καὶ ξυγκαθεῖσθαι αὐτῷ ἅπαντες, καὶ ξύσσιτοι εἶναι ἡξίαν, καὶ ἀνέδην, ὅσις βέλοιτο, εἰδ' αὐτὸν ὑβρίζεν. Procop. Rer. Gothic. lib. i.

† Ne honore quidem ac reverentiâ inter eos rex potiebatur. Theod.

‡ Ἀλλὰ ὁμοτραπέζας εἶχε καὶ ὁμοσκήνας, καὶ πολὺ τὸ φιλόδωρον εἰς αὐτὰς ἦν. Procop. Rer. Goth. lib. ii.

none.

none §. He was expelled from his throne upon every frivolous and unjust pretence.—Should they happen to be unsuccessful in war, should the fruits of the earth, through the inclemency of the season, fail ||, the unhappy monarch was degraded from his dignity, and became the victim of disappointment and injustice. He was answerable for the fate of battles in which he was not obeyed; and, though destitute of authority among men, he was punished for not having the power of a God over the weather.

The northern Germans had two assemblies for the management of their foreign and domestic affairs. The greater assembly consisting of the body of the people for matters of state*: the lesser composed of the prince and his assessors for the administration of justice. Every

Their
greater as-
sembly:

§ Regem aliquando interfecerunt, nullam ob aliam causam nisi quod sub nullius imperio esse vellent. Vid. Procop. in eod. libro.

|| Apud hos, ritu veteri, potestate depositâ removetur, si sub eo fortuna titubaverit belli, vel segetum copiam negaverit terra at sacerdos est perpetuus, obnoxius discriminibus nullis, ut reges. Amm. Marcell. lib. xxviii.

* Coeunt certis diabus. Ut *turbæ placuit* confidunt armati. Mox rex, vel princeps, prout ætas cuique, prout nobilitas, prout decus bellorum, prout facundia audiuntur. Si displicuit sententia, fremitu aspernantur, sin placuit frameas concutiunt. Tacit. Germ. xi.

man

man of perfect age††, and without any distinction of degree, had a voice at this general convention. The multitude came completely armed*, and all had a right to deliver their sentiments with the utmost freedom. Alliances were made, wars resolved upon, treaties of peace concluded, in the great assembly‖; whose power extended also to capital punishments for offences against the state§.

The lesser.

The general assembly of the people elected annually one hundred out of their own number to attend the person of the prince, and to serve as his assessors when he sat in judgment†. These gave weight to his decisions, and enforced his decrees. They sat at his table, accompanied him in his progress, they were his guard in peace, his protection in war‡. To support the expence of entertaining these constant attendants of his presence he received from the people a voluntary and

†† Omnes puberes armati convenire cgebantur. Cæsar, lib. v.

* Armatum multitudinis concilium. Cæsar, lib. v.

‖ De majoribus omnes. Tacit. Germ. xi.

§ Licet apud concilium accusare quoque, et discrimen capitis intendere. Tacit. Germ. xii.

† Eliguntur in iisdem conciliis centeni singulis (regibus) ex plebe comites consilium simul et auctoritas. Tacit. Germ. xii.

‡ In pace decus, in bello præsidium. Tacit. Germ. xiii.

free

free gift of cattle and corn §, and he also derived a kind of revenue from the fines imposed upon petty offenders ||. The prince and his assessors formed the lesser assembly; and differences between individuals were heard and determined before them.

Traitors against the state, and deserters to an enemy, were tried among the old Germans before the general assembly of the people, and, upon conviction, hanged*. Cowards and men of infamous lives were drowned under hurdles in stagnant and muddy pools †. The laws of the ancient Saxons on the continent were particularly severe against incontinence and adultery. Should a virgin in her father's house, or a married woman in that of her husband, be guilty of incontinence, she was either strangled by her relations in private, and her body burnt, or she was delivered over to a species of public punishment the most ignominious and cruel. Cut short of

Their legal
punish-
ments.

§ Mos est civitatibus ultro ac viritim conferre principibus, vel armentorum, vel frugum aliquid; quod pro honore acceptum etiam necessitatibus subvenit. Tacit. Germ. xv.

|| Pars multæ regi exsolvitur. Tacit. Germ. xii.

* Proditores et transfugas arboribus suspendunt. Tacit. Germ. xii.

† Ignavos et imbelles et corpore infames, cæno et palude, injecta insuper crate, mergunt. Tacit. Germ. xii.

her clothing by the waist, she was whipped from village to village by ancient matrons, who, at the same time, pricked her body with knives till she expired under their hands ‡. Virtue, in this case, degenerated into unpardonable barbarity.—They animadverted upon petty offenders with slighter punishments. A fine in cattle, proportioned to the degree of the offence, was levied by the authority of the king and his assessors upon the delinquent; even homicide itself was expiated by a certain mulct payable to the prince and the relations of the person slain §. Such were the rude elements which time has improved into the present constitution of English government.

Concluding
reflection.

To enter into the character and manners of the Saxons, in this place, would pre-occupy a province which we have reserved for another occasion. Before their arrival in Britain we have only transient and interrupted glimpses of their history through the obscurity in which

‡ In antiqua Saxonia, si virgo in paternâ domo, vel maritata sub conjugè sit adulterata; manu propriâ strangulatam cremant; aut cingulo tenus vestibus abscissis, flagellant eam castæ matronæ, et de villa in villam missæ occurrunt novæ flagellantes, et cultellis pungunt, donec interimant. Bonifacius Episcopus, in epistolâ ad Ethelbaldum, Anglorum regem.

§ Luitur enim etiam homicidium certo armentorum et pecorum numero, recepitque satisfactionem universa domus. Tacit. Germ. xii.

their

their progress towards the South was involved. Their chief virtue was a ferocious bravery; their sole occupation was war. They certainly performed great actions, but they themselves were unacquainted with the means of transmitting them to posterity; and their fame being left in the hands of their enemies, came down through time mutilated and incomplete.

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